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(54) **A process for increasing the flavonoid content of a plant and plants obtainable thereby**

(57) The present invention provides a process for increasing the flavonoid content of a plant wherein said process comprises increasing the activity of chalcone synthase and flavonol synthase therein. The invention

further relates to novel plants obtainable by the process of the invention and to food products made therefrom.

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DescriptionField of the invention

[0001] The present invention relates to the field of improving the nutritional content and more particularly the flavonoid content of plants. The invention provides a process for increasing the flavonoid content of plants and the novel plants derivable therefrom.

Background to the invention

[0002] The flavonoids form a large family of low molecular weight polyphenolic compounds, which occur naturally in plant tissues and include the flavonols, flavones, flavanones, catechins, anthocyanins, isoflavonoids, dihydroflavonols and stilbenes (Haslam (1998), Practical Polyphenolics. From Structure to Molecular Recognition and Physiological Action, Cambridge Univ. Press). More than 4000 flavonoids have been described, most are conjugated to sugar molecules and are commonly located in the upper epidermal layers of leaves (Stewart *et al.*, (2000), J. Agric. Food Chem 48:2663-2669).

[0003] The prior art provides increasing evidence that flavonoids, especially flavonols are potentially health-protecting components in the human diet. Dietary flavonols help prevent the development of free-radical derived damage to endothelial cells of the coronary arteries and to the development of atherosclerosis (Vinson *et al.*, (1995) J. Agric. Food Chem. 43:2798-2799).

[0004] A positive correlation between the high flavanol/flavone intake and a reduction in coronary heart disease has been reported (Hertog *et al.*, (1993) Lancet, 342:1007-1011 and Hertog *et al.*, (1997) Lancet 349:699). A similar relationship was observed in a Finnish cohort study (Knekt *et al.*, (1996) BMJ 312: 478-481) and in the seven countries study (Hertog *et al.*, (1995) Arch Intern Med 155:381-386).

[0005] Flavonoids have also been reported to exhibit anti-inflammatory, anti-allergic and vasodilatory activities *in vitro* (Cook *et al.*, (1996) Nutrit. Biochem. 7:66-76). Such activity has been attributed in part to their ability to act as antioxidants, capable of scavenging free radicals and preventing free radical production.

[0006] It is also noteworthy that flavanones possess significant antioxidant activity. For example, naringenin has been reported to exhibit 1.5 times greater antioxidant activity than the vitamins C or E (Rice-Evans *et al.*, (1997) Trends Plant Sci. 2:152-159). Flavanones have also been implicated in cancer prevention. For example, naringenin has been reported to exhibit an anti-oestrogenic activity (Ruh *et al.*, (1995) Biochem. Pharmacol. 50:1485-1493), and also has been shown to inhibit human breast cancer cell proliferation (So *et al.*, (1996) Nutrition and Cancer 26:167-181).

[0007] Flavanones and their glycosides are also considered important determinants of taste. For example, in contrast to many other fruit, the genus Citrus is characterised by a substantial accumulation of flavanone glycosides (Berhow and Smolensky, (1995) Plant Sci. 112:139-147). It is noteworthy that in grapefruit the sour taste results mainly from the accumulation of the bitter flavanone glycoside, naringin (Horowitz and Gentili, (1969) J. Agric. Food Chem. 17: 696-700). Naringin comprises the flavanone naringenin and a disaccharide neohesperidoside group attached to the 7 position of the A-ring. It is also noteworthy that on a relative scale of bitterness the 7- β -glucoside compounds are between 1/50th to 1/5th as bitter as quinine (Horowitz and Gentili, (1969) J. Agric. Food Chem. 17:696-700).

[0008] The potential advantages of providing food products with elevated flavonoid levels are therefore clearly established in the art. It would be desirable to produce plants which intrinsically possess elevated levels of health protecting compounds such as flavonoids in order to develop food products with enhanced health protecting properties. Traditionally, the approach to improving plant varieties has been based on conventional cross-breeding techniques, however these require time for breeding and growing of successive plant generations. More recently, recombinant DNA technology has been applied to the general problem of modifying plant genomes to produce plants with desired phenotypic traits.

[0009] The flavonoid biosynthetic pathway is well established and has been widely studied in a number of different plant species (see, for example, Koes *et al.*, BioEssays, 16, (1994), 123-132). Briefly, three molecules of malonyl-CoA are condensed with one molecule of coumaroyl-CoA, catalysed by the enzyme chalcone synthase, to give naringenin chalcone which rapidly isomerises, catalysed by chalcone isomerase, to naringenin. Subsequent hydroxylation of naringenin, catalysed by flavanone 3-hydroxylase, leads to dihydrokaempferol. Dihydrokaempferol itself can be hydroxylated, catalysed by flavanone 3'-hydroxylase or flavanone 3',5'-hydroxylase to produce either dihydroquercetin or dihydromyricetin respectively. All three dihydroflavonols subsequently can be converted to anthocyanins (by the action of dihydroflavonol reductase and flavonoid glucosyltransferase) or alternatively converted to flavonols such as kaempferol, quercetin and myricetin by the action of flavonol synthase.

[0010] W00/04175 Unilever discloses a process for increasing the flavonoid content of plants wherein through over-expression of chalcone isomerase the flavonol content of a tomato plant may be increased in the peel of the tomato fruit.

[0011] Furthermore it is suggested that over-expression of a chimeric chalcone synthase gene in the Poplar hybrid

Populus tremule x p. alba may give rise to a increase in the level of flavonoid therein. (Niodescu et al, Acta bot. Gallica, 1996, 143(6), 539-546. In one line flavonoids were located in both cortical and peripheral tissues of the stem. In other lines differences in flavonoid were found to be present in superficial tissues.

[0012] WO 99/37794 Unilever, discloses a method whereby the incorporation of different transcription factors into the genome of the plant can be used to alter flavonoid levels through the overexpression of genes encoding enzymes of the flavonoid biosynthetic pathway. No reference to overexpression of any specific gene in the pathway is disclosed. Furthermore, the transformed plants provided by this earlier disclosure have been found not to show an increase in both chalcone synthase and flavonol synthase enzyme activities.

[0013] The objective technical problem to be solved by the present invention therefore relates to providing an alternative process for increasing the flavonoid content of plants. More particularly the problem to be solved by the present invention is directed to providing a process which demonstrates enhanced flavonoid synthesis over alternative processes known in the art, specifically in the flesh tissue of fruit.

[0014] It was not known at the time of filing that the over-expression of specific combinations of genes which encode enzymes of the flavonoid biosynthetic pathway may be used to increase the content of flavonoids in a plant. Furthermore there was no hint or suggestion in the disclosure of the prior art that any synergistic effect could result from the over-expression of any selected combination of genes encoding enzymes of the flavonoid biosynthetic pathway, nor that such a synergistic effect could be localised to particular edible tissues of a plant. In particular it was not known at the time of filing that increasing the activities of chalcone synthase and flavonol synthase could bring about such results.

Definition of terms

[0015] The expression "plant" is used to refer to a whole plant or part thereof, a plant cell or group of plant cells. Preferably however the invention is particularly directed at transforming whole plants and the use of the whole plant or significant parts thereof such as leaves, fruit, seeds or tubers.

[0016] A "pericarp tissue" is used to refer to the wall of a fruit, developing from the ovary wall after fertilisation has occurred.

[0017] A "columella tissue" is used to refer to the central axis of a fruit, including placental tissue.

[0018] A "flavonoid" or a "flavanone" or a "flavonol" may suitably be an aglycone or a conjugate thereof, such as a glycoside, or a methyl, acyl or sulfate derivative. Moreover quercetin and kaempferol as used herein can be taken to refer to either the aglycon or glycoside forms, wherein analysis of the non-hydrolysed extract achieves the glycoside, whereas analysis of the hydrolysed extract achieves the aglycon.

[0019] A "gene" is a DNA sequence encoding a protein, including modified or synthetic DNA sequences or naturally occurring sequences encoding a protein, and excluding the 5' sequence which drives the initiation of transcription.

[0020] A "DNA sequence functionally equivalent thereto" is any sequence which encodes a protein which has similar functional properties.

[0021] According to another embodiment, a functionally equivalent DNA sequence shows at least 50% identity to the respective DNA sequence. More preferably a functionally equivalent DNA sequence shows at least 60%, more preferred at least 75%, even more preferred at least 80%, even more preferred at least 90%, most preferred 95-100% identity, to the respective DNA sequence.

[0022] According to the most preferred embodiment a functionally equivalent DNA sequence shows not more than 5 base pairs difference to the respective DNA sequence, more preferred less than 3, e.g. only 1 or 2 base pairs different.

[0023] According to another embodiment a functionally equivalent sequence is preferably capable of hybridising under low stringent (2xSSC, 0.1% SDS at 25°C for 20min, Sambrook et al 1986) conditions to the respective sequence.

[0024] Preferably an equivalent DNA sequence is capable of transcription and subsequent translation to an amino acid sequence showing at least 50% identity to the amino acid sequence encoded by the respective DNA sequence (DNASTar MegAlign Software Version 4.05 and the Clustal algorithm set to default parameters). More preferred, the amino acid sequence translated from an equivalent DNA sequence translated from an equivalent DNA sequence has at least 60%, more preferred at least 75%, even more preferred at least 80%, even more preferred at least 90%, most preferred 95-100% identity to the amino acid sequence encoded by the respective DNA sequence.

[0025] "Breaker" is the ripening stage corresponding to the appearance of the first flush of colour on the green fruit.

[0026] "Operably linked to a promoter" means the gene, or DNA sequence, is positioned or connected to a promoter in such a way to ensure its functioning. The promoter is any sequence sufficient to allow the DNA to be transcribed. After the gene and promoter sequences are joined, upon activation of the promoter, the gene will be expressed.

[0027] A "construct" is a polynucleotide comprising nucleotide sequences not normally associated with nature.

[0028] An "increased" level of flavonoids is used to indicate that the level of flavonoids is preferably at least 4 times higher than in similar untransformed plants, more preferred 5-10, most preferred 10-40 times higher than in similar untransformed plants.

Brief description of the invention

[0029] It has now been found that the over-expression of a gene combination comprising genes encoding chalcone synthase and flavonol synthase provides a novel process by which the flavonoid content of a plant may be increased. Moreover, it has been demonstrated by way of the present invention that this novel combination exhibits a synergy over and above the effect on flavonoid content of over expressing either gene individually in a plant.

[0030] Accordingly it is a first object of the invention to provide a process for increasing the flavonoid content of a plant wherein said process comprises increasing the activity of chalcone synthase and flavonol synthase therein.

[0031] Preferably the process of the invention will achieve increased activity of chalcone synthase and flavonol synthase by the addition to the genome of a plant of one or more nucleotide sequences encoding each of these enzymes.

[0032] A first embodiment of the invention is therefore directed to a process as described above wherein said process comprises incorporating into said plant one or more nucleotide sequences encoding a chalcone synthase and one or more nucleotide sequences encoding a flavonol synthase.

[0033] It is preferred that said one or more nucleotide sequences encoding each of these enzymes is incorporated into the genome of a plant via a genetic transformation of said plant.

[0034] A second embodiment of the invention is therefore said to comprise a process as described above wherein said process comprises the steps;

- (i) transforming a plant cell with a gene construct;
- (ii) regenerating said plant cell to produce a transformed plant;

wherein said gene construct comprises one or more nucleotide sequences encoding a chalcone synthase and one or more nucleotide sequences encoding a flavonol synthase. Preferably said gene construct comprises nucleotide sequences according to sequence identification numbers 1 and 7 or functional equivalents thereof.

[0035] The process of the invention may be applied to increase the flavonoid content of a plant by increasing enzyme activity throughout a plant or, more preferably, by increasing localised enzyme activity in certain tissues, in particular leaves and/or fruits. This localised increase in enzyme activity allows greater improvement in flavonoid content to be achieved in those tissues which normally form the edible parts of the plant while maintaining good viability in the progeny.

[0036] A further embodiment therefore comprises a process as described above wherein the flavonoid content of said plant is increased in leaf tissue and/or fruit tissue.

[0037] It has been found that the increase in flavonoid content observed in plants modified according to the process outlined above comprises an increase in a plurality of different flavonoid types depending on the nature of the plant tissue in which modified gene expression is occurring. Preferably the increase in flavonoid content in a plant according to the invention comprises an increase in flavanone content and/or an increase in flavonol content.

[0038] It is particularly advantageous that the present invention provides a process by which an increase in the flavonoid content of a plant can be achieved by a localised increase in flavanone and/or flavonol content in those tissues which make up the non-peel i.e. flesh component of a fruit. These tissues may typically include pericarp tissue and columella tissue.

[0039] Embodiments of the invention therefore comprise a process as disclosed above wherein the flavanone content of said plant is increased in pericarp tissue and further more a process as disclosed above wherein flavanone content of said plant is increased in columella tissue.

[0040] It has been shown that the content of the flavanone naringenin may be particularly increased in fruit tissue by way of the disclosed process. Peel, pericarp and columella tissues all showed high levels of naringenin. The pericarp was found to have up to a 290 fold increase over control plants and the columella tissue a 730 fold increase over control plants.

[0041] A preferred embodiment of the invention therefore comprises a process as disclosed above wherein said flavanone content comprises naringenin.

[0042] It has also been shown that the content of the flavonol kaempferol may be particularly increased in the flesh component of a fruit. The kaempferol content of the pericarp tissue was increased up to 14 fold over the control and the columella tissue an increase of up to 32 fold over control plants.

[0043] A further embodiment of the invention therefore comprises a process as disclosed above wherein said flavonol content comprises kaempferol.

[0044] It has been shown that the increase flavonoid level observed in those plants of the present invention is not a cumulative effect of the over-expression of CHS and FLS. The observed increase in the flavonoid content is a demonstration of a synergy found to exist in selecting to increase the activities of both chalcone synthase and flavonol synthase in a plant.

[0045] The over-expression of the further enzymes, chalcone isomerase or flavanone 3-hydroxylase can be used to further increase the flavonoid.

[0046] The invention also relates to a gene construct suitable for the genetic transformation of a plant in accordance with the process described above.

[0047] Accordingly, a second object of the invention is to provide a gene construct comprising one or more nucleotide sequence encoding a chalcone synthase and one or more nucleotide sequences encoding a flavonol synthase wherein said nucleotide sequences are operably linked to a promoter.

[0048] It is a third object of the invention to provide the use of a construct as previously described in the genetic transformation of a plant.

[0049] It is a fourth object of the invention to provide a genetically modified plant with an increased flavonoid content compared to an equivalent unmodified plant, wherein said genetically modified plant is obtainable by a process according to the above description.

[0050] Preferably the plants according to the invention are suitable for human consumption. Suitable plants are for example from the Pisum family such as peas, family of Brassicae, such as green cabbage, Brussel sprouts, cauliflower, the family of Phaseolus such as barlotti beans, green beans, kidney beans, the family of Spinacea such as spinach, the family of Solanaceae such as potato and tomato, the family of Daucus, such as carrots, family of Capsicum such as green and red pepper, and the family of Ribesiaceae such as strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, black currant and edible grasses from the family of Gramineae such as maize, and citrus fruit for example from the family of Rutaceae such as lemon, orange, tangerine, or from the apple family. Also preferred oil producing plant such as sunflower, soybean and rape. Also preferred are plants which can form the basis of an infusion such as black tea leaves, green tea leaves, jasmine tea leaves. Also preferred is the tobacco plant.

[0051] A particularly preferred plant for use in the method according to the invention is the tomato plant.

[0052] The invention also relates to the use of the plant according to the invention or desired parts thereof in the preparation of food products or skin or hair protective products.

Detailed description of the invention

[0053] The present invention as disclosed above has identified that altering a plant to increase the activities of chalcone synthase and flavonol synthase in combination gives rise to a significant increase in the flavonoid content of such a plant.

[0054] It has been found that it is possible to increase the level of flavonoids, particularly flavanones and flavonols in tomato fruit and even more surprising in the flesh of a tomato fruit, a tissue that normally contains only trace amounts of flavonoids, thereby producing tomatoes with enhanced nutritional, preservative and flavour characteristics.

[0055] The present invention also identifies that increasing the activities of additional enzymes in a plant can be effective in bringing about an increase in the flavonoid content therein. In this respect it is demonstrated that increasing the activities of a group of enzymes comprising chalcone synthase (CHS), chalcone isomerase (CHI), flavanone 3-hydroxylase (F3H) and flavonol synthase (FLS) is effective in increasing the levels of flavonoid in a plant. Preferably this group of enzymes comprises CHS, CHI and FLS as these are believed to be most influential on flavonoid biosyntheses. The advantage of additionally increasing CHI activity is to provide increased flavonol levels in peel tissue as well as flesh tissue, in particular the flavonols quercetin and kaempferol as previously described in WO0/04175 which is incorporated herein by reference. This can be enabled by incorporating into a plant appropriate nucleotide sequences encoding these enzymes, preferably as demonstrated herein, this is accomplished via the route of genetic transformation.

[0056] This combination of increased enzyme activities has been shown to further increase the flavonoid content through the flavonol component thereof. More particularly this is reflected as an increase in the content of the flavonols quercetin and / or kaempferol in the peel tissue of a modified plant. Neither the content of quercetin nor kaempferol can be increased in the peel tissues of plants which have been modified to increase CHS alone, FLS alone or CHS and FLS in combination.

[0057] By analogy to the demonstrated effect on flavonoid content in tomato fruit tissue under the control of a fruit specific promoter, the process of the invention may be used to increase the level of flavonoids, in particular by increasing the levels of flavanones and flavonols, in other specific tissues of a plant in which flavonoid biosynthesis occurs.

[0058] Of particular advantage is to increase flavonoid levels of leaves where these are to be consumed as food products such as spinach and tea, it is advantageous that the level of flavonoids, in particular flavonols are increased in such leaves. For fruit-bearing plants such as tomato, strawberry, apple etc it is advantageous that the level of flavonoids, in particular the level of flavanones and/or flavonols, is increased in the fruit. For plants with edible flowers e. g. broccolli and cauliflower it is advantageous that the level of flavonoids, in particular the level of flavanones and/or flavonols, is increased in the flower. For plants with edible stems such as asparagus it is advantageous that the level of flavonoids, in particular the level of flavanones and/or flavonols, is increased in the stem. For edible seeds, such as

peas, sunflower seed or rapeseed it is advantageous that the level of flavonoids, in particular the level of flavanones and/or flavonols, is increased in the seed etc. Typically the type and choice of one or more of the regulatory sequences for the genes encoding the biosynthetic enzymes can provide the desired increase in specific parts of the plants.

[0059] For the preparation of food products from plants according to the invention the desired parts of the plant with the altered level of flavonoids may be harvested and further processed for consumption or storage. For example, leaves of a spinach plant, modified according to the invention may be subsequently blanched, chopped, frozen and packaged for storage. Similarly tea leaves can be processed to provide tea with an enhanced flavonoid content.

[0060] Seeds such as peas may be harvested and further processed e.g. blanching and freezing into pea products. In addition, comminuted products may be made e.g. pea soup. Other seeds e.g. oil seeds such as sunflower seed or soy-bean may be used for the extraction of oil.

[0061] Plant flowers such as broccoli or cauliflower may be harvested and further processed e.g. to prepare frozen vegetables or soup. Also stems such as asparagus may be harvested and further processed e.g. to produce asparagus soup.

[0062] A particularly preferred embodiment of the invention relates to the fruits especially tomatoes with increased levels of flavonoids, particularly flavanones and flavonols. These tomatoes may be harvested and eaten fresh. For fresh consumption suitable tomato varieties for modification in accordance with the present invention include the salad variety *Ailsa Craig*. Alternatively, the tomatoes may be used in the preparation of food products. Also heat-treatment may be applied, for example tomatoes may be used to prepare tomato sauces with tomato as one of the main ingredients such as tomato paste, tomato ketchup, pizza sauce, pasta sauce, salsas, or dressings. Also the tomatoes may be used to prepare products like tomato juice or tomato soups. Tomatoes according to the invention may alternatively be used in the preparation of high flavonoid containing extracts, or at least partially dried and consumed in such a dried form.

[0063] The sequence encoding a biosynthetic enzyme for flavonoid biosynthesis may be a genomic or cDNA clone, or a sequence which in proper reading frame encodes an amino acid sequence which is functionally equivalent to the amino acid sequence of the biosynthetic gene encoded by the genomic or cDNA clone. A functional derivative can be characterised by an insertion, deletion or a substitution of one or more bases of the DNA sequence, prepared by known mutagenic techniques such as site-directed mutagenesis or derived from a different species. The functionality can be evaluated by routine screening assays, for example, by assaying the flavonoid content of the resulting transgenic plant.

[0064] Gene sequences encoding enzymes for flavonoid biosynthesis for use according to the present invention may suitably be obtained from plants, in particular higher plants as these generally possess a flavonoid biosynthetic pathway. Genes involved in flavonoid biosynthesis have been isolated from various plant species such as, but not limited to: *Petunia* (see, for example, Van Tunen *et al.*, (1988) EMBO J. 7:1257-1263; Koes *et al.*, (1989) Gene 81:245-257), *Antirrhinum* (see, for example, Grotewald and Peterson (1994) Mol. Gen. Genet., 242:1-8; Sommer and Saedler (1986), Mol. Gen. Genet., 202:429-434) and maize (see, for example, Grotewald and Peterson (1994), Mol. Gen. Genet. 242:1-8).

[0065] The *Petunia* plant is a particularly preferred source. Alternatively, equivalent genes could be isolated from plant gene libraries, for example by hybridisation techniques with DNA probes based on known flavonoid biosynthetic genes.

[0066] CHS coding sequence highly conserved and number of suitable CHS sequences for the purpose of the present invention are known in the art. Neisbach-Klosgen (1986) reported nucleotide similarity higher than 66% and amino acid similarity higher than 80% over the coding regions of CHS isolated from a number of different species (*Antirrhinum*, *Petroselinum*, *Zea*, *Ranunculus*, *Petunia*, *Magnolia*, *Hordeum*). FLS alignment indicate greater than 48% identity at nucleotide and greater than 50% identity at amino acid level from a number of different species (*Petunia*, *Solanum*, *Malus*, *Citrus*, *Arabidopsis*) which can be suitably used in the present invention.

[0067] The gene sequences of interest will be operably linked (that is, positioned to ensure the functioning of) to one or more suitable promoters which allow the DNA to be transcribed. Suitable promoters, which may be homologous or heterologous to the gene (that is, not naturally operably linked to a gene encoding an enzyme for flavonoid biosynthesis), useful for expression in plants are well known in art, as described, for example, in Weising *et al.*, (1988) Ann. Rev. Genetics 22:421-477. Promoters for use according to the invention may be inducible, constitutive, or tissue-specific or have various combinations of such characteristics.

[0068] Useful promoters include, but are not limited to constitutive promoters such as carnation etched ring virus (CERV) promoter, cauliflower mosaic virus (CaMV) 35S promoter, or more particularly the enhanced cauliflower mosaic virus promoter, comprising two CaMV 35S promoters in tandem (referred to as a "Double 35S" promoter). These would have the effect of increasing flavonoid levels throughout a plant.

[0069] For the purpose of the present invention it is preferred to use a tissue-specific or developmentally regulated promoter instead of a constitutive promoter. A tissue-specific promoter induces or increases expression of the gene (s) for flavonoid biosynthesis in certain desired tissues, preferably without enhancing expression in other, undesired tissues. This has the advantage that the tissue of interest shows the desired flavonoid increase while the possible

impact on other plant tissues is minimised, thereby maintaining high viability in the progeny.

[0070] Promoters used in over-expression of the biosynthetic enzymes for flavonoid biosynthesis in tomato plants will preferably be tissue specific, especially fruit-specific. Suitable fruit-specific promoters include the tomato E8 promoter (Deikman *et al.*, (1988) EMBO J 7:3315-3320), 2A11 (Van Haaren *et al.*, (1993) Plant Mol Biol 21:625-640), E4 (Cordes *et al.*, (1989) Plant Cell 1:1025-1034) and PG (Bird *et al.*, (1988) Plant Mol Biol 11:651-662; Nicholass *et al.*, (1995) Plant Mol Biol 28:423-435).

[0071] It is noteworthy that in these studies sequences encoding CHS and FLS were placed under the control of the tissue-specific tomato E8 promoter. Much larger increases in flavonol accumulation in pericarp and columella tissues may however be achieved, by linking the CHS and FLS transgenes to stronger promoters, such as CaMV35S. This is supported by ectopic expression of CHI under the control of the relatively 'weak' granule bound starch synthase promoter from potato resulted in only a 4-fold increase in flavonol accumulation in peel tissue compared with an up to 78-fold increase observed when CHI was introduced under the control of the strong CaMV35S promoter (data unpublished).

[0072] Accordingly, the invention provides in a further aspect a gene construct in the form of an expression cassette comprising as operably linked components in the 5'-3' direction of transcription, one or more units each comprising a suitable promoter in a plant cell, a plurality of nucleotide sequences selected from the group comprising sequences encoding a CHS, CHI and FLS for flavonoid biosynthesis and a suitable transcriptional and translational termination regulatory region. More preferably said group comprising sequences encoding CHS and FLS.

[0073] The promoter and termination regulatory regions will be functional in the host plant cell and may be heterologous or homologous to the plant cell and the gene. Suitable promoters which may be used are described above.

[0074] The termination regulatory region may be derived from the 3' region of the gene from which the promoter was obtained or from another gene. Suitable termination regions, which may be used, are well known in the art and include *Agrobacterium tumefaciens nopaline* synthase terminator (*Tnos*), *Agrobacterium tumefaciens mannopine* synthase terminator (*Tmas*), the rubisco small subunit terminator (*TrbcS*) and the *CaMV 35S* terminator (*T35S*). Particularly preferred termination regions for use according to the invention include the *Tnos* and *TrbcS* termination regions.

[0075] Such gene constructs may suitably be screened for activity by transformation into a host plant via *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* co-transformation and screening for flavonoid levels.

[0076] Conveniently, the expression cassette according to the invention may be prepared by cloning the individual promoter/gene/terminator units into a suitable cloning vector. Suitable cloning vectors are well known in the art, including such vectors as pUC (Norrandar *et al.*, (1983) Gene 26:101-106), pEMBL (Dente *et al.*, (1983) Nucleic Acids Research 11:1645-1699), pBLUESCRIPT (available from Stratagene), pGEM (available from Promega) and pBR322 (Bolivar *et al.*, (1977) Gene 2:95-113). Particularly useful cloning vectors are those based on the pUC series. The cloning vector allows the DNA to be amplified or manipulated, for example by joining sequences. The cloning sites are preferably in the form of a polylinker, that is a sequence containing multiple adjacent restriction sites, so as to allow flexibility in cloning.

[0077] Preferably the DNA construct according to the invention is comprised within a vector, most suitably an expression vector adapted for expression in an appropriate host (plant) cell. It will be appreciated that any vector which is capable of producing a plant comprising the introduced DNA sequence will be sufficient.

[0078] Suitable vectors are well known to those skilled in the art and are described in general technical references such as Pouwels *et al.*, Cloning Vectors. A laboratory manual, Elsevier, Amsterdam (1986). Particularly suitable vectors include the Ti plasmid vectors.

[0079] Transformation techniques for introducing the DNA constructs according to the invention into host cells are well known in the art and include such methods as micro-injection, using polyethylene glycol, electroporation, or high velocity ballistic penetration. A preferred method for use according to the present invention relies on *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* mediated co-transformation.

[0080] After transformation of the plant cells or plant, those plant cells or plants into which the desired DNA has been incorporated may be selected by such methods as antibiotic resistance, herbicide resistance, tolerance to amino-acid analogues or using phenotypic markers.

[0081] Various assay within the knowledge of the person skilled in the art may be used to determine whether the plant cell shows an increase in gene expression, for example, Northern blotting or quantitative reverse transcriptase PCR (RT-PCR). Whole transgenic plants may be regenerated from the transformed cell by conventional methods. Such transgenic plants having improved flavonoid levels may be propagated and crossed to produce homozygous lines. Such plants produce seeds containing the genes for the introduced trait and can be grown to produce plants that will produce the selected phenotype.

[0082] It is recognised that the overexpression of genes encoding biosynthetic enzymes for flavonoid biosynthesis according to the process of the invention may result in the accumulation of both anthocyanins and flavonoids other than anthocyanins, particularly if the biosynthetic enzymes operate at a position along the flavonoid biosynthesis pathway before the respective flavonol and anthocyanin pathways diverge. This may be undesirable as the formation of

anthocyanins not only results in the production of aesthetically unpleasing purple coloured fruits, but may also limit the production of flavonols.

[0083] In a further embodiment, this may be avoided by blocking the route to expression of anthocyanins for example by an additional step comprising antisense suppression of dihydroflavonol reductase (DFR), the enzyme catalysing the final step in the production of anthocyanins. Alternatively, biosynthetic enzymes may be overexpressed in a mutant line, such as a tomato line which is deficient in DFR activity, for example, the anthocyanin without (aw) mutant which is described by Goldsbrough *et al.*, (1994) Plant Physiol 105:491-496.

[0084] The present invention may be more fully understood by reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1: Northern analysis of tomato fruit harvested at different developmental stages, denoted as: green (G), breaker (B), turning (T) and red (R), and separated into peel and flesh. Leaves were harvested from young tomato plants. RNA was isolated from the samples, separated on formaldehyde agarose gels, blotted and hybridised with *Petunia hybrida* chs-a (chalcone synthase) or fls (flavonol synthase) probes.

Figure 2a: Plasmid restriction maps of pUCAP, pT7E8, pUCM2 and pUCM3.

Figure 2b: Plasmid restriction maps of pBBC3, pFLAP10, pFLAP11 and pFLAP15.

Figure 2c: Plasmid restriction maps of pFLAP60, pBBC60, pFLAP80 and pFLAP81.

Figure 2d: Plasmid restriction maps of pBBC80, pFLAP50, pFLAP71, and pFLAP500.

Figure 2e: Plasmid restriction maps of pFLAP600, pFLAP700, pFLAP800 and pBBC800.

Figure 2f: Plasmid restriction maps of pSJ89, pcJ102 and pBBC50.

Figure 3: Flavonoid levels from peel and flesh tissues of non-transformed FM6203 tomato fruit in hydrolysed extracts (a) and (b) and non-hydrolysed extracts (c) and (d).

Figure 4: Level of naringenin-7-glucoside in (A) pericarp and (B) columella tissues from fruit from BBC60 (CHS) and control (pSJ89) transformed tomatoes.

Figure 5: Naringenin level in hydrolysed peel tissue from To fruit from pBBC80 and control (pSJ89) transformed tomatoes.

Figure 6: Naringenin (A) and Kaempferol (B) level in hydrolysed pericarp tissue from CHSxFLS (pBBC60+BBC80) and pSJ89 control fruit.

Figure 7: Naringenin (A) and kaempferol (B) level in hydrolysed columella tissue from CHSxFLS (pBBC60+pBBC80) and control (pSJ89) fruit.

Figure 8: Level of rutin (A) and kaempferol-3-rutinoside (B) in non-hydrolysed peel tissue from To fruit from pBBC800 and control (pCJ102) transformed tomatoes.

Figure 9: Accumulation of naringenin-7-glucoside (A) and kaempferol-3-rutinoside-7-0-glucoside (B) in non-hydrolysed columella tissue from To fruit from pBBC800 and control (pCJ102) transformed tomatoes.

Figure 10: Sequence ID number : *Petunia hybrida* (V30) cDNA sequence for chalcone synthase (*CHS-a*) obtainable from EMBL database, accession number X04080 as published by Koes et al., (1986), Nucleic Acids Res., 14, 5229-5239. Actually cDNA, but referred to mRNA on EMBL database.

Figure 11: Sequence ID number : *Petunia hybrida* (V30) amino acid sequence for chalcone synthase (*CHS-a*) obtainable from SWISS-PROT database, accession number P08894, as published by Koes et al., (1986), Nucleic Acids Res., 14, 5229-5239.

Figure 12: Sequence ID number : *Petunia hybrida* (V30) cDNA sequence for chalcone isomerase (*CHI-a*) obtainable from EMBL database, accession number X14589, as published by van Tunen et al., (1988), EMBO J., 7, 1257-1263.

Figure 13 Sequence ID number : *Petunia hybrida* (V30) amino acid sequence for chalcone isomerase (*CHI-a*) obtainable from PIR database, accession number SO4725, as published by van Tunen et al., (1988), EMBO J., 7, 1257-1263.

Figure 14: Sequence ID number : *Petunia hybrida* (V30) cDNA sequence for flavanone-3-hydroxylase (F3H).

Figure 15: Sequence ID number : *Petunia hybrida* (V30) amino acid sequence for flavanone-3-hydroxylase (F3H).

Figure 16: Sequence ID number 7: *Petunia hybrida* (V30) cDNA sequence for flavonol synthase (FLS).

Figure 17: Sequence ID number : *Petunia hybrida* (V30) amino acid sequence for flavonol synthase (FLS).

Examples

Example 1: Plant material.

[0085] All experiments can be performed using normally available processing tomato lines as the starting material or salad varieties. FM6203 is processing tomato line and is comparable to the commercially available line "Amish paste". *Ailsa Craig* is a suitable salad variety.

[0086] Plants of tomato line FM6203 was grown in a glasshouse with a 16h photoperiod and a 21/17°C day/night temperature.

Example 2: Bacterial strains.

[0087] The *Escherichia coli* strain used was:

[0088] DH5 α *supE44,D(lacZYA-ArgF)U169,f80lacZDM15,hsdR17(r_k⁻;m_k⁺),recA1, endA1,gyrA96,thi-1,relA1,deoR* (Hanahan, 1983).

[0089] The *Agrobacterium* strain used was *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* LBA4404 (Hoekema, 1985).

[0090] Transformation of *E. coli* DH5 α was performed using the method of Hanahan (1983).

[0091] Transformation of *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* LBA4404 was performed according to Gynheung *et al.*, (1988).

Example 3: Analysis of endogenous expression of CHS and FLS in ripening tomato fruit

[0092] Northern analysis was used to determine the level of expression of the endogenous *chs* gene(s) and the endogenous *fls* gene(s), during FM6203 tomato fruit ripening.

[0093] Total RNA was isolated from the peel and flesh from FM6203 fruit at green, breaker, turning and red stages of ripening and also from young leaves according to the protocol of Van Tunen et al., (1988). For Northern analysis, 10 μ g of total RNA was loaded on formaldehyde agarose gels and separated by electrophoresis at 25V overnight according to Sambrook *et al.*, (1989). Separated RNA was then blotted onto Hybond N⁺ membrane (Amersham) overnight according to Sambrook *et al.*, (1989).

[0094] For detection of endogenous chalcone synthase transcripts, *Petunia hybrida* cDNA fragments encoding chalcone synthase (*chs-a*) were used as a probe. These fragments were obtained by RT-PCR using total RNA extracted from closed flowers from *Petunia hybrida* W115 as a target with primer combinations F13/F14 (Table 1). The PCR amplification products were verified by sequence analysis prior to hybridisation.

[0095] For detection of endogenous flavonol synthase transcripts, *Petunia hybrida* cDNA fragments encoding flavonol synthase were used as a probe. These fragments were obtained by RT-PCR using total RNA extracted from closed flowers from *Petunia hybrida* W115 as a target with primer combinations F20/F21 (Table 1). The obtained PCR products were verified by sequence analysis prior to hybridisation.

[0096] CHS and FLS probes were radio-labelled with ³²P and purified according to methods given in Gibco Life Technologies RadPrime Labelling system. Blots were hybridised overnight at 55°C and washed three times in 2 x SSC, 0.1% SDS, 55°C, 30 min, before being exposed to X-ray film for 48 hr.

[0097] The autoradiographs from the northern blot analysis are shown in Figure 1. Both the *chs* and *fls* transcripts are abundantly present in the peel tissue of tomato fruit from all developmental stages tested. Accumulation of both the *chs* and *fls* transcripts peak during the 'breaker' and 'turning' stages of development and subsequently decrease in the 'red' stage.

[0098] In the flesh of tomato fruit, the levels of both *chs* and *fls* transcripts were very low at all stages of fruit development. This finding is in agreement with HPLC data that showed only trace amounts of naringenin and flavonol compounds in this tissue (Example 7). It is noteworthy that both *Chs* and *fls* transcripts are present in low but a detectable

level in tomato leaves.

Example 4: Gene constructs.

4.1 Strategy to coordinately express flavonoid biosynthesis genes in tomato fruits

[0099] During the ripening of tomato fruit the expression levels of the *chs* and *fls* genes are abundant in the peel but remain low in the flesh.

[0100] The production of flavonoids in tomato fruits is increased by coordinate expression of the *Petunia hybrida* flavonoid biosynthetic enzymes chalcone synthase and flavonol synthase. To increase the level of flavonoids predominantly in the fruit of tomato the chalcone synthase and flavonol synthase genes are expressed under the control of the fruit specific tomato E8 promoter.

4.2 Gene constructs

[0101] The different components of the gene fusions and the different plasmid vectors constructed were obtained as follows. Plasmid vector pUCAP (Van Engelen *et al.*, 1995) was provided by CPRO-DLO. Binary vector pGPTV-KAN (Becker *et al.*, 1992) was provided by Unilever. The *nos* terminator (*Tnos*) was amplified from plasmid pBI121 (Jefferson *et al.*, 1987). Plasmid vector pAL77, used for construction of pFLAP10, was obtained from R.W.Davies (Stanford University, Lloyd *et al.*, 1992). The double enhanced CaMV 35s promoter (*Pd35s*) was isolated from plasmid pMOG18 (Symons *et al.*, 1990). The tomato E8 promoter (*PE8*) was PCR amplified from tomato genomic DNA (variety Money-maker) using Taq polymerase and primers E851 and E8A2 (Table 1). E851 and E8A2 hybridise to the distal (5') and proximal (3') ends of the E8 promoter respectively. The resulting 2.2 kb PCR fragment was then ligated into the EcoRV site of pT7 Blue-T vector (available from Novagen). This resulted in a vector with the E8 promoter inserted in clockwise orientation (same as lac Z gene), which was called pT7E8 (Figure 2a). All components were cloned as described below.

4.2.1 Construction of plasmids pUCM2 and pUCM3

[0102] To construct plasmid pUCM2, the multiple-cloning-site of plasmid pUCAP (Figure 2a) was modified by the insertion of two adapters. First, adapter F1/F2 (Table 1), containing the restriction sites *Sall/SphI*, was ligated with plasmid pUCAP restricted with *Sall/SphI*. This resulted in plasmid pUCM1. Next, adapter F3/F4 (Table 1), consisting of *PacI/NotI/BglII/EcoRI* restriction sites was ligated into plasmid pUCM1 restricted with *PacI/EcoRI*. This resulted in plasmid pUCM2 (Figure 2a). To construct plasmid pUCM3, plasmid pUCAP was digested with *PacI/Ascl* and the whole multiple-cloning-site was replaced by adapter F5/F6 (Table 1). This resulted in plasmid pUCM3 (Figure 2a).

4.2.2 Construction of pBBC3.

[0103] To construct plasmid pBBC3, adapter F38/F39 (Table 1) was ligated into plasmid pGPTV-KAN digested with *EcoRI/HindIII*. This replaced the *gusA-Tnos* gene in pGPTV-KAN with a small multiple cloning site consisting of *PacI/EcoRI/HindIII/Ascl* restriction sites (Figure 2b).

4.2.3 Construction of pFLAP10

[0104] Firstly, *Tnos* was amplified by PCR from pBI121 using primers F12 and AB13 (Table 1). The resulting 250bp amplification product was ligated into pUCM2 as a *Sall/ClaI* fragment.

[0105] Secondly, the *C1* gene was cloned as a *BamHI/Sall* fragment upstream of *Tnos* as follows. The *C1* gene was firstly transferred as an ~2kb *EcoRI* fragment from plasmid pAL77 to the high-copy number plasmid pBluescript SK-, resulting in plasmid pBLC1. The *C1* gene was then isolated from pBLC1 as a 1.6kb *EcoRI/PacI* fragment and adapters F7/F8 and F9/F10 (Table 1) were ligated to each end of the fragment. Ligation of adapters F7/F8 and F9/F10 add unique *BamHI* and *Sall* restriction sites to both ends of the gene and remove the existing *EcoRI* and *PacI* sites. The resulting fragment was restricted with *BamHI/Sall* and the *C1* fragment ligated upstream of the *nos* terminator, resulting in plasmid pFLAP2.

[0106] Thirdly, *Pd35s* was cloned as a *KpnI/BamHI* fragment upstream of *C1* in pFLAP2 as follows. To create a unique *BamHI* site at the 3' end of the *d35s* promoter, plasmid pMOG18 was digested with *EcoRV/BamHI* thus removing the 3' part of the *d35s* promoter and the *gusA* gene. The 3' part of the 35s promoter present in plasmid pAB80 (Bovy *et al.*, (1995)) was then ligated as a 0.2kb *EcoRV/BamHI* fragment into the pMOG18 vector, resulting in plasmid pMOG18B. To create a unique *KpnI* site at the 5' end of the *d35s* promoter plasmid pMOG18B was then digested with *EcoRI*, the ends were polished with Klenow polymerase, and subsequently digested with *BamHI*. The resulting 0.85kb

blunt/*Bam*HI *d35s* promoter fragment was cloned into plasmid pBLC1 digested with *Xho*I/polished with Klenow polymerase/*Bam*HI. This resulted in plasmid pBld35S. Finally, the *d35s* promoter was transferred as a *Kpn*I/*Bam*HI fragment from pBld35s to plasmid pFLAP2. This resulted in plasmid pFLAP10 (Figure 2b).

4.2.4 Construction of pFLAP11.

[0107] pFLAP11 was constructed by replacing the nos terminator of pFLAP10 with the rbcS terminator sequence by cloning downstream of the C1 gene as follows. The rbcS terminator was present as a ~664bp fragment on plasmid pFLAP20. The rbcS terminator was amplified from plasmid pFLAP20 using primer combination F75/M13rev (Table 1). The primer F75 contains a unique SalI site introducing a SalI site at the 5' end of the rbcS terminator. The ~664bp amplification product was restricted with SalI and ClaI and ligated with pFLAP10 which had been restricted with the same enzymes. This resulted in plasmid pFLAP11 (Figure 2b).

4.2.5 Construction of pFLAP15

[0108] pFLAP15 was constructed by replacing the *Pd35s* promoter of pFLAP10 with the tomato E8 promoter by cloning upstream of the C1 gene as follows. The E8 promoter was present as a 2.2kb fragment on plasmid pT7E8. This E8 promoter fragment contained an unwanted *Pac*I site at position 430 relative to the 5' end. To remove this *Pac*I site, plasmid pT7E8 was digested with *Pac*I, the ends were polished with T4 DNA polymerase, and the plasmid was self-ligated, resulting in plasmid pT7E8-Pac. The E8 promoter was subsequently amplified from this plasmid by PCR with primers F23 and F26 (Table 1), which contained unique *Kpn*I and *Bam*HI restriction sites respectively. The PCR product was digested with these enzymes and cloned upstream of the C1 gene in plasmid pFLAP10. This resulted in plasmid pFLAP15 (Figure 2b).

4.3 *Petunia hybrida chs-a* cloning

4.3.1 Cloning of the *chs-a* cDNA from *Petunia hybrida*

[0109] The *chs-a* cDNA was amplified from plasmid pFBP176, with primer combination F13/F14 (Table 1). pFBP176 contains the complete 1.2 kb *Petunia hybrida chs-a* cDNA (Koes *et al.*, 1988) cloned as an EcoRI-HindIII fragment into pEMBL18 (available from Boehringer Mannheim; Dente and Cortese, 1987). The primers F13 and F14 contain a 5' extension with a unique BamHI (F14) and SalI (F13) restriction site. This results in a 1.2kb *chs-a* fragment.

4.3.2 Construction of the *chs-a* gene fusion

[0110] The *PE8 - chs-a - Tnos* gene construct was made as follows:

[0111] The *chs-a* gene was amplified from the plasmid pFBP176, using primers F14 and F13 which added either BamHI or SalI restriction sites respectively. The 1.2kb PCR amplification product was restricted with these enzymes and ligated downstream of the E8 promoter into pFLAP15 restricted with the same enzymes. This resulted in plasmid pFLAP60 (Figure 2c).

4.3.3 Construction of pBBC60

[0112] The *PE8 - chs-a - Tnos* insert of plasmid pFLAP60, containing the *chs-a* gene, was transferred as a *Pac*I/*Asc*I fragment to binary vector pBBC3. The resulting plasmid, pBBC60 (Figure 2c) was used for transformation of FM6203.

4.4 *Petunia hybrida fls* cloning

4.4.1 Cloning of the *fls* gene from *Petunia hybrida*

[0113] The *fls* gene was amplified from a *Petunia hybrida* petal cDNA library using primers, F20 and F21 (Table 1). These primers contain a 5' extension with a unique BamHI (F20) and SalI (F21) restriction site. This results in a 1.14kb *fls* fragment.

4.4.2 Construction of the *fls* gene fusion

[0114] The *PE8 - fls - Tnos* gene construct was made as follows:

[0115] Firstly, the FLS gene was amplified from a *Petunia* petal cDNA library using primers F20 and F21. The 1.14kb

PCR product was restricted using BamH1 and Sal1 and ligated downstream of the *E8* promoter into plasmid pFLAP15 or pFLAP11 restricted with the same enzymes. This resulted in plasmids pFLAP80 and pFLAP81 respectively (Figure 2c).

4.4.3 Construction of pBBC80

[0116] The *PE8- fls -Tnos* insert from plasmid pFLAP80, containing the *fls* gene, was transferred as a *PacI/AscI* fragment to binary vector pBBC3. The resulting plasmid, pBBC80 (Figure 2d) was used for transformation of FM6203.

4.5 *Petunia hybrida chi-a* cloning

4.5.1 Cloning of the *chi-a* gene from *Petunia hybrida*

[0117] The *chi-a* gene was amplified from plasmid pMIP41 (kindly supplied by Dr. A.vanTunen), with primer combination F15/F16 (Table 1). pMIP41 contains the complete *chi-a* cDNA from *Petunia hybrida* inbred line V30. The primers F15 and F16 contain a 5' extension with a unique BamHI (F15) and Sall (F16) restriction site. This results in an ~0.75kb *chi-a* fragment.

4.5.2 Construction of the *chi-a* gene fusion

[0118] The d35S-*chi-a*-Tnos gene construct was made as follows:

[0119] The *chi-a* gene was amplified from the plasmid pMIP41, using primers F15 and F16 which added either BamHI or SalI restriction sites respectively. The ~0.75kb amplification product was restriction with these enzymes and ligated downstream of the d35S promoter into pFLAP10 restricted with the same enzymes. This resulted in plasmid pFLAP50 (Figure 2d).

4.6 *Petunia hybrida f3h* cloning

4.6.1 Cloning of the *f3h* gene from *Petunia hybrida*

[0120] A 500bp *f3h* fragment was amplified from a *Petunia hybrida* petal cDNA library using primers, F48 and F51 (Table 1). This fragment was used to isolate a full-length *f3h* cDNA by plaque hybridisation. Nine positive plaques were purified and the pBluescript plasmids containing cDNA inserts were excised from the phages by in vitro excision and sequenced. One clone contained a complete F3H open reading frame and was designated pF3Hc.

4.6.2 Construction of the *f3h* gene fusion

[0121] The d35S-*f3h*-Tnos gene construct was made as follows.

The F3H cDNA was restricted from pF3Hc as a BamHI-XhoI fragment and ligated with pFLAP11 restricted with the same enzymes. This resulted in plasmid pFLAP71 (Figure 2d).

4.7 Construction of pBBC800 (*PE8-chs-a-Tnos-P35S-chi-a-Tnos-Pd35S-f3h-Trbcs-PE8-fls-Trbcs*)

[0122] The single-gene constructs described above were used to construct plasmid pBBC800 as follows:

The inserts of plasmids pFLAP50, pFLAP60, pFLAP71 and pFLAP81 were cloned behind each other in plasmid pUCM3 to make the plasmid pFLAP800.

[0123] Firstly, the pFLAP50 was digested with KpnI/Clal and the *chi* insert was cloned in plasmid pUCM3 cut with the same enzymes. This resulted in plasmid pFLAP500 (Figure 2d). Secondly, the *chs* insert of plasmid pFLAP60 was ligated as a EcoRI/SphI fragment behind the *chi* gene in plasmid pFLAP500, resulting in plasmid pFLAP600 (Figure 2e). Thirdly, the *f3h* gene of plasmid pFLAP71 was ligated as a BglII/HinDIII fragment behind the *chs* gene in pFLAP600, resulting in plasmid pFLAP700 (Figure 2e). Fourthly, the *fls* insert of plasmid pFLAP81 was ligated as a NotI/AscI fragment behind the *f3h* gene in plasmid pFLAP700, resulting in plasmid pFLAP800 (Figure 2e). Finally, the 12kb insert of plasmid pFLAP800, containing the four structural genes, was transferred as a *PacI/AscI* fragment to binary vector pBBC3. The resulting plasmid, pBBC800 (Figure 2e) was used for transformation of FM6203.

4.8 GPTV control plasmid

[0124] A GPTV-based binary plasmid containing the β -glucuronidase gene (with the *st-ls1* intron; Vancanneyt *et al.*

1990) was used as a control plasmid to transform FM6203). This allows direct comparison between *gus* transformed control plants and plants containing the *chs-a* and *fls* constructs generated via a tissue culture procedure.

4.8.1 pSJ89

[0125] A GPTV-based binary plasmid containing the β -glucuronidase gene (with the *st-ls1* intron; Vancanneyt *et al.* 1990) under control of the CaMV 35s promoter and the *nos* poly(A) signal (*P35s-gusA-Tnos*).

[0126] Plasmid pSJ89 was constructed as follows: the CaMV 35s promoter - *gus-int* fragment from plasmid p35SGUSINT (Vancanneyt *et al.* 1990) was ligated as a *HindIII* -*SacI* fragment into the plasmid pSJ34 restricted with the same enzymes. This resulted in plasmid pSJ89 (Figure 2f). pSJ34 is a derivative of the binary vector pGPTV-KAN (Becker *et al.* 1992) in which the *Bam*HI site between the NPTII selectable marker and the gene 7 poly(A) signal was destroyed by 'filling-in' with klenow polymerase.

4.8.2 pCJ102

[0127] A GPTV-based binary plasmid containing the β -glucuronidase gene (with the *st-ls1* intron; Vancanneyt *et al.* 1990) under control of the double CaMV 35s promoter and the *nos* poly(A) signal (*Pd35s-gusA-Tnos*).

[0128] Plasmid pCJ102 was constructed as follows: oligonucleotide primers 167 and 168 (Table 1) were used to amplify the 460bp 5' fragment of the GUS gene (from vector pSJ34) and modifying the 5' end to create a *NcoI* site and thus modifying the second amino acid. The PCR amplified fragment was digested with *NcoI* and *EcoRV* and ligated with the *HindIII*/*EcoRI* vector fragment of pSJ34 together with the *HindIII*/*NcoI* 2x35S promoter fragment of pPV5LN and the *EcoRV*/*EcoRI* 3'GUS-Nos terminator fragment of pSJ34, yielding the vector pCJ102 (Figure 2f).

Example 5: Stable transformation of tomato line FM6203.

5.1 *A. tumefaciens* transformation

[0129] Binary plasmids of pBBC60, pBBC80 and pSJ89 were introduced into *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* strain LBA4404 by adding 1 μ g of plasmid DNA to 100 μ l of *A. tumefaciens* cells competent of DNA uptake. Competent cells of *A. tumefaciens* were prepared by inoculation of 50ml of YEP medium (Sambrook *et al.*, 1989) and culturing with shaking at 100rpm at 28°C until the culture reached an OD₆₀₀ of 0.5-1.0. The cells were then harvested by centrifugation and the supernatant discarded before re-suspension in 1ml of 50mM CaCl₂ solution and dispensing into 100 μ l aliquots.

[0130] The DNA-*Agrobacterium* mixture was flash-frozen in liquid nitrogen before thawing rapidly by placing in a water bath at 37°C. After the addition of 1ml YEP medium the bacteria were incubated at 28°C for 4 hours with gentle shaking. Finally, transformed bacteria were selected on YEP-agar plates supplemented with 50 μ g/ml kanamycin. The presence of the plasmids in kanamycin resistant clones was tested by PCR analysis using pBBC60(CHS SI and NosAs), pBBC80 (FLSs1 and FLSas1) or pSJ89 (30035S and Gus2) specific primers respectively (Table 1).

5.2 Tomato transformations

[0131] Seeds from tomato line FM6203 were surface sterilised by incubation in 1.5% hypochlorite for 2 hours before washing seeds well with three rinses of sterile water. The surface sterilised seeds were then germinated and the seedlings grown for 8 days on a 1:1 mixture of vermiculite and MS medium (Murashige and Skoog, 1962; Duchefa) supplemented with 0.3% (w/v) sucrose, with a photoperiod of 16h (3000 lux) at 25°C.

[0132] For transformation, eight-day old cotyledons were cut into 25mm² squares and 'pre-incubated' for 24h on tobacco suspension feeder-layer plates at low light intensity (1000 lux). The tobacco leaf suspension culture was maintained in MS salts supplemented with Gamborgs B5 vitamins, sucrose (3% w/v), 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D; 1.0mg/l) and benzylaminopurine (BAP; 0.2mg/l). Tobacco suspension feeder-layer plates were prepared by transferring 2ml of cell suspension culture to the surface of solidified MS media (MS salts supplemented with Gamborgs B5 vitamins, sucrose (3% w/v), agarose (6g/l), 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D; 1.0mg/l), benzylaminopurine (BAP; 0.2mg/l) and 100mg/l inositol) and overlaying the cells with sterile filter paper.

[0133] A single colony from the *Agrobacterium* LBA4404 cultures containing one of the binary vectors mentioned in Example 4 was grown for 48h in liquid Minimal A medium (Sambrook *et al.*, 1989) supplemented with 50 μ g/ml kanamycin to an OD₆₀₀ of 0.5-1.0. The bacteria were pelleted by centrifugation and resuspended in MS medium supplemented with Gamborgs B5 vitamins (Duchefa) and 3% (w/v) sucrose at an OD₆₀₀ of 0.5. The cotyledon explants were then incubated in the *A. tumefaciens* suspension for 30min, blotted dry on filter paper and co-cultivated for 48h on tobacco feeder layer plates at 25°C and low light intensity.

[0134] After co-cultivation, the explants were transferred to regeneration medium, consisting of MS medium supple-

mented with Nitsch vitamins, sucrose (2% w/v), agargel (5 g/l), zeatin-riboside (2mg/l), kanamycin (100mg/l) and cefotaxime (500mg/l). Regenerating explants were transferred to fresh medium every two weeks. Kanamycin resistant shoots were transferred to rooting medium, consisting of MS medium supplemented with Gamborgs B5 vitamins, sucrose (0.5% w/v), gelrite (2g/l), kanamycin (50mg/l) and cefotaxime (250mg/l). During regeneration and rooting, trans-

formed plantlets were maintained in a growth chamber at 25°C with a 16h photoperiod (3000 lux). After root formation, plantlets were transferred to soil and grown in the glasshouse.

[0135] Transgenic plants harbouring the constructs pBBC60, pBBC80, pBBC800 and pSJ89 were selected following specific amplification of the *chs-a*, *fls*, *chi*, *f3h* or *gus* transgenes respectively.

Example 6: Measurement of flavonoids in tomato fruits.

6.1 Growth and harvest of tomato fruits

[0136] Tomato plants were grown in 10 litre pots in a greenhouse under standard growth conditions (day/night temperatures 22°C/17°C, 16h light). Fruits were harvested at fully red, ripe stage (18-21dpa). For discrimination between flavonoids in peel and in flesh tissue, the outer layer of about 1mm thick (i.e. cuticula, epidermal layer plus some sub-epidermal tissue) was separated from the fruit using a scalpel and classified as peel. The columella was excised from the remaining flesh tissue and seeds and jelly-like parenchyma removed, this tissue was classified as columella. The remainder of the fruit flesh tissue was classified as pericarp. After separation, tissues were frozen in liquid nitrogen, ground to a fine powder and stored at -80°C until use.

6.2 Extraction of flavonoids from tomato tissues

[0137] Flavonoids were determined as their glycosides or as aglycones by preparing non-hydrolysed and hydrolysed extracts, respectively.

[0138] Preparation of hydrolysed extracts was based on the method described by Hertog *et al.*, (1992). Frozen tissues were ground to a fine powder, using a coffee grinder, before tissues were lyophilized for 48h. For flavonoid extraction, fifty mg of freeze-dried material was transferred to a 4ml reacti-vial. To each sample, 1.6ml of 62.5% methanol (HPLC grade) in distilled water and 0.4ml of 6M HCl was added. The vials were sealed, using screw caps containing a teflon inlay, before incubating for 60 min at 90°C in a waterbath. After incubation (hydrolysis), the tubes were cooled on ice, before the addition of 2ml of 100% methanol and sonicated for 5 min.

[0139] For determination of flavonoid-glycosides and naringenin-chalcone, 50mg of lyophilized tomato tissue was added to 4ml of 70% aqueous methanol in a reacti-vial. The vials were closed with screw caps containing a teflon inlay. Extraction was carried out by ultrasonication for 30min at room temperature (~25°C) with occasional additional mixing.

[0140] Using flavonoid standards (obtained from Apin Chemicals Ltd, Abingdon, UK) it was established that complete hydrolysis of the flavonoid glycosides was achieved, whilst ~95% of naringenin-chalcone was chemically converted into naringenin. Furthermore, the recovery of quercetin, kaempferol and naringenin standards following addition to peel or flesh extracts immediately prior to hydrolysis was greater than 90%.

6.3 HPLC conditions for flavonoid analysis

[0141] After sonication, a 1ml aliquot from each extract was filtered through a 0.2µm PTFE disposable filter (Whatman) and 20µl from the filtrate was injected into the HPLC system.

[0142] The solvent delivery system was an HP1100 (Hewlett Packard), incorporating a cooled HP1100 autosampler maintained at 4°C with a fixed 20µl loop, and a Prodigy C₁₈ (4.6 x 150mm, particle size 5µm) analytical column (Phenomenex). The column was placed in a HP1100 column oven set at 30°C. A photodiode array detector (HP1100) was used to record the spectra of compounds eluting from the column on-line. The detector was set to record absorbance spectra from 200 to 550nm with a resolution of 2nm, at a time interval of 2 seconds.

[0143] Chemstations software (Hewlett Packard, version 6.) was used to control the solvent delivery system and the photodiode array detector.

[0144] HPLC separation of flavonoids in non-hydrolysed extracts (flavonoid-glycosides and naringenin-chalcone) was performed using a gradient of acetonitrile in 0.1% TFA, at a flow rate of 1.0ml/min: 10-17.5% linear in 8 min, then 17.5-25% in 12 min, a hold at 25% for 22 min followed by a 4 min washing with 50% acetonitrile in 0.1% TFA. After washing, the eluent composition was brought to the initial condition for 5 min, before next injection. HPLC separation of flavonoids present in hydrolysed extracts (flavonol aglycones and naringenin) was carried out under isocratic conditions of 25% acetonitrile (HPLC) in 0.1% trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) at a flow rate of 0.9ml/min.

[0145] Table 2 summarizes the retention times, obtained with the two different HPLC separation methods, of some flavonoid standards.

[0146] HPLC data were analyzed using Chemstations software (Hewlett-Packard version 6.). Absorbance spectra (corrected for baseline spectrum) and retention times of eluting peaks (with peak purity better than purity threshold value) were compared with those of commercially available flavonoid standards. Dose-response curves for quercetin, naringenin and kaempferol (0 to 25 µg/ml) were established to permit quantitation in the hydrolysed tomato extracts. Quercetin and kaempferol aglycones were detected and calculated from their absorbance at 370 nm and naringenin at 280 nm. Flavonol-glycosides and naringenin-chalcone were detected at 370 nm (see also Table 2). Flavonoid levels in tomatoes were calculated on a dry weight (µg/g D.Wt.) basis (for peel and flesh tissues). With the HPLC system and software used, the lowest detection limit for flavonoids in tomato extracts was about 0.1 µg/ml, corresponding with ~5 µg/g dry weight. Variation between replicate injections was less than 5%.

Example 7: Characterisation of the flavonoid content of non-transformed tomato fruit.

[0147] The chromatograms from HPLC analysis of hydrolysed extracts from red fruit of variety FM6203 are shown in Figure 3. Figure 3A shows that both quercetin and kaempferol were present in peel tissue. By contrast, figure 3B shows that hydrolysed extracts from pericarp tissue from the same fruit contained only trace amounts of quercetin with no detectable levels of kaempferol. Chromatograms obtained at 280 nm (not shown) from the same extracts showed a significant accumulation of naringenin in peel, but not in the pericarp tissues.

[0148] Analysis of non-hydrolysed peel extracts showed that at least five different flavonol-glycosides and naringenin chalcone were detected (Figure 3C). NMR-studies proved that the peak at RT = 19.2 min was rutin while the peak at 17.6 min was a quercetin-3-trisaccharide: rutin with apiose linked to the glucose of the rutinoside. The retention time and absorbance spectrum of the minor peak at 19.7 min corresponded with those of quercetin-3-glucoside, while those of the peak at 21.9 min corresponded with kaempferol-3-rutinoside. The small peak at 25.6 min had an absorbance spectrum comparable to kaempferol-3-rutinoside, but its higher RT value indicates a yet unknown kaempferol-glycoside. The large peak at 34.8 min was naringenin chalcone. Aglycones of quercetin, kaempferol and naringenin (present in hydrolysed peel extracts) were not detectable in any of the non-hydrolysed extracts.

[0149] By contrast, analysis of non-hydrolysed extracts from pericarp tissue (Figure 3D) show that this tissue only accumulates low levels of rutin.

[0150] By comparing the levels of flavonoids detected in hydrolysed extracts with those from non-hydrolysed extracts of the same tissue, we conclude that the presence of quercetin and kaempferol aglycones represent hydrolysis products of their respective glycosides.

[0151] These HPLC-analyses of flavonoid accumulation show that the flavonoid biosynthetic pathway is active in the peel but not, or to a very limited level only, in the pericarp tissue of red FM6203 tomato fruit. This conclusion was supported by mRNA analyses of important enzymes of flavonoid biosynthesis (for example *chs* and *fls*) from peel and flesh tissues (Example 3).

Example 8: Flavonoids in peel and flesh from fruit harbouring pBBC60

[0152] To determine whether the pBBC60 construct was able to modify flavonoid accumulation in tomato fruit, the flavonoid profile of red fruit from pBBC60 and pSJ89 (control) transformants was determined. This analysis was performed by HPLC using hydrolysed extracts from thirty-three pBBC60 and five pSJ89 transformed fruit.

[0153] Comparison with hydrolysed extracts from red fruit from tomato variety FM6203, transformed with either pBBC60 or pSJ89, indicated that a number of pBBC60 lines accumulated increased levels of naringenin in peel and pericarp tissues. By contrast, the levels of quercetin and kaempferol accumulation in both tissues were similar between pBBC60 and pSJ89 transformants.

[0154] Further, hydrolysed extracts of pericarp tissue from pBBC60 transformants show a range of naringenin concentrations, with one line (plant H71) expressing a 5-7 fold increase compared to pSJ89 transformed control lines. This variation in the level of naringenin accumulation from control levels to up to a 7-fold increase is believed to be representative of a transgenic population.

[0155] Three pBBC60-transformed lines that accumulated increased levels of naringenin in both peel and pericarp tissue were selected and used to generate a T₁ population. In addition, a corresponding T₁ population from pSJ89 and FM6203 was also generated to provide control fruit for comparison.

[0156] Fruits from eighteen T₁-generation plants were analysed to characterise their level of flavonoid accumulation. Analysis of non-hydrolysed extracts from peel tissues showed a slight increase in the level naringenin chalcone in pBBC60 transformed fruit compared to pSJ89 (control) fruit. By contrast, analysis of non-hydrolysed extracts from pericarp tissues showed that pBBC60 transformed fruit accumulate significantly higher levels of a number of naringenin glycoside type flavanones (Table 3), in particular naringenin-7-glucoside (Figure 4A) when compared to pSJ89 controls.

[0157] The average levels of naringenin-7-glucoside in pericarp tissue from three control fruit was ~5 µg/g DW, compared to 220 µg/g DW in pBBC60 fruit number H104/5 (Table 3). These values represent an up to 44-fold increase in

naringenin-7-glucoside accumulation in pericarp tissue from pBBC60 fruit relative to control values.

[0158] Furthermore, analysis of non-hydrolysed extracts from the columella tissue of pBBC60 transformed fruit also showed significant increases in the levels of a number of naringenin-glycoside type flavanones (Table 4), in particular naringenin-7-glucoside, when compared to pSJ89 control fruit (Figure 4B). Notably, the average level of naringenin-7-glucoside in columella tissue from control fruit was ~5µg/gDW, compared to 280µg/gDW in pBBC60 fruit number H104/6 (Table 4). These values represent an up to 56-fold increase in naringenin-7-glucoside accumulation in columella tissue from pBBC60 fruit relative to control values.

[0159] These results show that pBBC60-transformed lines accumulate significantly increased levels of flavanone compounds in their flesh tissue relative to pSJ89 transformants. The variation in the concentration of naringenin and quercetin glycosides measured from pBBC60-transformed plants reflects a typical transgenic population. However, the data clearly show an increase in the level of naringenin glycosides, and more particularly naringenin-7-glucoside, in the flesh of pBBC60 transformed tomato fruit.

[0160] Further, it is noted that the levels of accumulation of the naringenin glycosides were significantly higher in the columella tissue when compared with the levels accumulated in the pericarp tissue.

Example 9: Flavonoids in peel and flesh from fruit harbouring pBBC80

[0161] To determine whether the pBBC80 construct was able to modify flavonoid accumulation in tomato fruit the flavonoid profile of fruit from pBBC80 and pSJ89 (control) transformants was determined. This analysis was performed by HPLC using hydrolysed extracts from thirty-four pBBC80 and eight pSJ89 transformed fruit.

[0162] Comparison between hydrolysed peel extracts from red fruit of variety FM6203, transformed with either pBBC80 or pSJ89, indicated that the mean level of naringenin accumulation was similar (Figure 5A). However, the average levels of naringenin in peel tissue from eight control fruit was 621µg/gDW, compared to 2425µg/gDW in fruit from pBBC80 number F61 (Table 5). These values represent an up to 4-fold increase in naringenin accumulation in peel tissue from pBBC80 fruit relative to control values. By contrast, the levels of quercetin and kaempferol accumulation were similar between pBBC80 and pSJ89 transformants.

[0163] By contrast, in hydrolysed extracts of flesh tissue from these fruits no increase in naringenin accumulation was observed in pBBC80 transformants. Furthermore, no significant changes in the levels of quercetin and kaempferol accumulation in the flesh were observed between pBBC80 and pSJ89 transformants.

[0164] The variation in the level of accumulation of naringenin from BBC80 transformants reflects a typical transgenic population. However, the data clearly show an increase in the level of naringenin in the peel of pBBC80 transformed plants.

Example 10: Crossing pBBC60 and pBBC80 transformed tomato lines

[0165] Tomato plants are functionally cleistogamous. For crossing of pBBC60 (CHS104) and pBBC80 (FLS50) transformed tomato plants, 'pollen-recipient' flowers were selected when at an immature developmental stage (tightly closed pale yellow petals). At this stage of floral development, the stamens have not elongated and so self-pollination, by pollen spreading onto the stigma is not possible. Crossing was achieved by removing the petals from these immature flowers to expose the stigma. Pollen from fully developed 'pollen-donor' flowers (open, bright yellow flowers) was collected using fine tweezers and transferred to the exposed stigma from the 'pollen-recipient' flower.

[0166] Following cross-pollination, flowers were labelled and the specific fruit harvested at red ripe stage. Seed was collected from these fruit and prepared for sowing by soaking in 2% HCl for 1 hour, before rinsing under running water and drying on filter paper. Dry seed stocks were stored at 4°C prior to planting.

[0167] For identification of progeny harbouring both pBBC60 and pBBC80 transgenes, twenty seeds from each cross were germinated in compost. Leaf material was harvested from individual seedlings and total genomic DNA isolated. The presence of both the pBBC60 and pBBC80 transgenes was confirmed by PCR amplification using specific primers for each of the CHS (CHSs1 and NosAs) and FLS (FLSs1 and FLSas1) transgenes. Seedlings harbouring both CHS and FLS transgenes were selected for transfer to hydroponic culture in a glasshouse with a 16h photoperiod and a 21/17°C day/night temperature. Staged (18-21 dpa) red fruit were harvested for analysis.

Example 11: Flavonoids in peel and flesh from fruit harbouring both pBBC60 and pBBC80

[0168] To determine whether concomitant expression of CHS (pBBC60) and FLS (pBBC80) was able to modify flavonoid accumulation in tomato fruit, the flavonoid profile of red fruit harbouring both pBBC60 and pBBC80 was determined. This analysis was performed by HPLC using hydrolysed extracts from four pBBC60-pBBC80 and five pSJ89 transformed fruit.

[0169] Comparison between hydrolysed peel extracts from red fruit of variety FM6203 harbouring either both CHS

(pBBC60) and FLS (pBBC80) or GUS (pSJ89) transgenes indicated a number of the CHSxFLS (pBBC60 + pBBC80) fruit accumulated increased levels of naringenin when compared to control pSJ89 fruit (Table 6A). The average levels of naringenin type compounds in peel tissue from four control fruit was 557 μ g/gDW, compared to 2224 μ g/gDW in fruit from CHSxFLS (pBBC60 + pBBC80) line number 11c. These values represent an up to 4-fold increase in naringenin accumulation in peel tissue from CHSxFLS (pBBC60 + pBBC80) fruit relative to control values. By contrast, the levels of quercetin and kaempferol accumulation were similar between CHSxFLS (pBBC60 + pBBC80) peel extracts from fruit and pSJ89 transformants (Table 6A).

[0170] Analysis of hydrolysed extracts from pericarp tissue from these fruits showed that a number of CHSxFLS (pBBC60 + pBBC80) fruit accumulated increased levels of both naringenin and kaempferol when compared with pSJ89 control fruit (Table 6B, Figure 6).

[0171] The average levels of naringenin and kaempferol in pericarp tissues from four control fruit was ~1 and 10 μ g/gDW, compared to levels of 294 and 145 μ g/gDW respectively in fruit from CHSxFLS (pBBC60 + pBBC80) line number 11c (Table 6B). These values represent an up to 290- and 14-fold increase in naringenin and kaempferol accumulation respectively in pericarp tissue from CHSxFLS (pBBC60 + pBBC80) fruit relative to control values.

[0172] Furthermore, analysis of columella tissue from CHSxFLS (pBBC60 + pBBC80) fruits showed a further significant increase in the level of accumulation of both naringenin (up to 730-fold) and kaempferol (up to 32-fold) (Table 6C, Figure 7). The average levels of naringenin and kaempferol accumulation in columella tissues from four control fruit was ~1 and 9.3 μ g/gDW, compared to levels of 727 and 299 μ g/gDW respectively in fruit from CHSxFLS (pBBC60 + pBBC80) number 11c. These values represent an up to 730- and 32-fold increase in naringenin and kaempferol accumulation respectively in columella tissues from CHSxFLS (pBBC60 + pBBC80) fruit relative to control values.

[0173] Analysis of non-hydrolysed pericarp and columella tissues from CHSxFLS (pBBC60 + pBBC80) transformed fruit showed that the predominant naringenin and kaempferol glycosides accumulating were naringenin-7-glucoside and kaempferol-3-*O*-rutinoside-7-*O*-glucoside respectively.

[0174] These results indicate that the flavonoid biosynthetic pathway in transgenic plants is not restricted to the peel, as it is in untransformed plants, but also active in the flesh (pericarp and columella) tissues of the fruit.

Example 12: Flavonoids in peel and flesh from fruit harbouring CHS-CHI-F3H-FLS (pBBC800) four gene construct

[0175] To determine whether the concomitant expression of CHS-CHI-F3H-FLS (pBBC800 construct) was able to modify flavonoid accumulation in tomato fruit, the flavonoid profile from red fruit harbouring pBBC800 was determined. This analysis was performed by HPLC using non-hydrolysed extracts from thirty-two pBBC800 and ten pCJ102 (d35S-GUS-nos) transformed fruit.

[0176] Comparison between non-hydrolysed peel extracts from red fruit of variety FM6203 harbouring either CHS-CHI-F3H-FLS (pBBC800) or GUS (pCJ102) transgenes showed that a number of pBBC800 fruit accumulated increased levels of quercetin glycosides, rutin and isoquercitrin, and kaempferol glycosides, kaempferol-3-rutinoside, compared to control (pCJ102) values (Table 7, Figure 8). The average levels of rutin and isoquercitrin in peel from ten control fruit was 773 and 13 μ g/gDW, compared to levels of 31630 and 5410 μ g/gDW respectively in fruit from pBBC800 transformant number 143. Similarly, the average level of accumulation of kaempferol-3-rutinoside in peel from ten control fruit was 59 μ g/gDW, compared to levels of 3050 μ g/gDW in fruit from pBBC800 transformant number 126. These values represent an up to 41- and 51-fold increase in quercetin and kaempferol glycoside accumulation respectively in peel tissue from pBBC800 transformed fruit relative to control values.

[0177] In addition, analysis of non-hydrolysed extracts from columella tissue revealed significant increases in the levels of a number of naringenin and kaempferol type glycosides compared to the control (pCJ102) control fruit (Table 8, Figure 9). The average level of kaempferol-3-*O*-rutinoside-7-*O*-glucoside and naringenin-7-glucoside accumulation in columella tissue from ten control plants was 5 and 7.5 μ g/gDW, compared to levels of 390 and 420 μ g/gDW respectively in the pBBC800 transformant number 20. This represents up to a 78-fold and 56-fold increase in kaempferol-3-*O*-rutinoside-7-*O*-glucoside and naringenin-7-glucoside accumulation respectively, in pBBC800 transformed fruit relative to control values.

[0178] Furthermore, analysis of both peel and columella tissues from selected 'single-copy' T₁ fruit showed that these increases in flavonol glycosides are both heritable and stable.

[0179] These results indicate that the flavonoid biosynthetic pathway in transgenic plants is not restricted to the peel, as it is in untransformed plants, but also active in the flesh (pericarp and columella) tissues of the fruit.

Example 13: Flavonoids in peel and flesh from fruit harbouring pBBC60, pBBC80 and pBBC50

[0180] We have shown that ectopic expression of chalcone isomerase (pBBC50, figure 2f) significantly increases flavonol (quercetin and kaempferol-glycosides) accumulation in tomato peel tissue (Bovy *et al.*, WO0004175). To determine whether concomitant expression of CHS (pBBC60), FLS (pBBC80) and CHI (pBBC50) was able to modify

flavonoid accumulation in tomato fruit (peel and flesh tissues), fruit harbouring pBBC60, pBBC80 and pBBC50 transgenes were generated by crossing.

[0181] Tomato plants are functionally cleistogamous. Therefore for crossing of pBBC60+pBBC80 (Example 11) with pBBC50 transformed tomato plants, 'pollen-recipient' flowers were selected when at an immature developmental stage (tightly closed pale yellow petals). At this stage of floral development, the stamens have not elongated and so self-pollination, by pollen spreading onto the stigma is not possible. Crossing was achieved by removing the petals from these immature flowers to expose the stigma. Pollen from fully developed 'pollen-donor' flowers (open, bright yellow flowers) was collected and transferred to the exposed stigma from the 'pollen-recipient' flower.

[0182] Following cross-pollination, flowers were labelled and the specific fruit harvested at red ripe stage. Seed was collected from these fruit and prepared for sowing by soaking in 2% HCl for 1 hour, before rinsing under running water and drying on filter paper. Dry seed stocks were stored at 4°C prior to planting.

[0183] For identification of progeny harbouring pBBC60, pBBC80 and pBBC50 transgenes, forty-five seeds were germinated in compost. Leaf material was harvested from individual seedlings and total genomic DNA isolated. The presence of the pBBC60, pBBC80 and pBBC50 transgenes was confirmed by PCR amplification using specific primers for each of the CHS (CHSs1 and NosAs), FLS (FLSs1 and FLSas1) and CHI (CHI6 and 30035S) transgenes. Seedlings harbouring CHS, FLS and CHI transgenes were selected for transfer to hydroponic culture in a glasshouse with a 16h photoperiod and a 21/17°C day/night temperature. Staged (18-21 dpa) red fruit were harvested for analysis.

[0184] The flavonoid profile of peel and columella tissue from red fruit harbouring pBBC60, pBBC80 and pBBC50 transgenes was determined. This analysis was performed by HPLC using non-hydrolysed extracts from 2 independent fruit selected from each of 10 pBBC60+pBBC80+pBBC50 transgenic and 4 azygous control plants.

[0185] Comparison between non-hydrolysed peel extracts from red fruit of variety FM6203 harbouring CHS (pBBC60), FLS (pBBC80) and CHI (pBBC50) transgenes and an azygous control indicated a number of the CHSx-FLSxCHI (pBBC60+pBBC80+pBBC50) fruit accumulated increased levels of quercetin-glycosides, rutin and isoquercitrin, and kaempferol-glycosides, kaempferol-3-O-rutinoside (K-3-R) and kaempferol-3-O-rutinoside-7-O-glucoside (K-3-R-7-G) (Table 9). For example, the average levels of rutin and isoquercitrin in peel tissue from 8 control fruit was 2394 and 29µg/gDW respectively, compared to levels of 64985 and 24617µg/gDW respectively in fruit from CHSx-FLSxCHI (pBBC60+pBBC80+pBBC50) line number 22.

[0186] Similarly, the average level of accumulation of kaempferol-3-O-rutinoside in peel from 8 control fruit was 276µg/gDW, compared to levels of 3918µg/gDW in fruit from CHSxFLSxCHI (pBBC60+pBBC80+pBBC50) line number 28.

[0187] These values represent an up to 27-, 848- and 14-fold increase in rutin, isoquercitrin and kaempferol-3-O-rutinoside accumulation respectively in peel tissue from CHSxFLSxCHI (pBBC60+pBBC80+pBBC50) transformed fruit relative to control values.

[0188] In addition, analysis of non-hydrolysed extracts from columella tissue revealed significant increases in the levels of a number of naringenin- and kaempferol-glycosides compared to the azygous control fruit (Table 10). The level of kaempferol-3-O-rutinoside-7-O-glucoside and naringenin-7-O-glucoside accumulation in columella tissue from eight control plants was ≤5µg/gDW, compared to levels of 475 and 841µg/gDW respectively in CHSxFLSxCHI (pBBC60+pBBC80+pBBC50) line numbers 40 and 45 respectively. As such, these values represent at least a 95-fold and 168-fold increase in kaempferol-3-O-rutinoside-7-O-glucoside and naringenin-7-O-glucoside accumulation respectively, in CHSxFLSxCHI (pBBC60+pBBC80+pBBC50) transformed fruit relative to control values.

[0189] These results indicate that the flavonoid biosynthetic pathway in CHSxFLSxCHI (pBBC60+pBBC80+pBBC50) transgenic plants is not restricted to the peel, as it is in untransformed plants, but also active in the flesh (pericarp and columella) tissues of the fruit.

Example 14: Preparation of tomato paste

Harvest

[0190] Firm red-ripe tomato fruit (approx. 50 kg/run) were harvested and collected in buckets up to 16 hr before processing. Fruit were rinsed in water and damaged fruit and leaves removed prior to processing. No attempt was made to standardise fruit maturity or size.

Processing conditions

[0191] Fruit was chopped and held at the target 'break' temperature of 96°C for 5 minutes. The chopped fruit was pulped and the resulting material passed through a 1.5 mm (0.060 in) screen. This puree was reduced to approximately 14 BRIX using a Simulated Double Effect Evaporator at 150-180° C, under vacuum at 22-23" Hg. Evaporation was continued at 12" Hg until a final BRIX of 20-25 was achieved. The resulting paste was canned in 250g tins, sterilised

in a boiling kettle for 45 min and finally cooled under a water spray for 30 min.

Table 1. Overview of PCR primers and adapters used.

Seq. ID No.	Primer(*)	Sequence (5' to 3')
AB13		CCCATCGATGCGTCTAGTAACATAGATGAC
CHS S1		CAATTCAGGAGTCGAGAGG
167		AGTCCCCCATGGTACGTCTGTAGAAACC
168		CGTTTTCGTTCGGTAATCACCATTCC
E851		GAATTCAGCTTGACATCCCTAAT
E8A2		CTTTTGCACTGTGAATGATTAGA
F1		TCGACCATATCGATGCATG
F2		CATCGATATGG
F3		TAAGCGGCCGCGAGATCTGG
F4		AATTCAGATCTGCGGCCGCTTAAT
F5		TAAGGGGTACCACCATCGATACCGAATTCTACATGCATGCATGGA GATCTCCCAAGCTTCTAAGATGCGGCCGCTAAACATGG
F6		CGCGCCATGTTTAGCGGCCGCGATCTTAGAAGCTTGGGAGATCTCCATG CATGCATGTAGAATTCCGGTATCGATGGTGGTACCCCTTAAT
F7		AATTGCACCCGGTCG
F8		GATCCGACCG
F9		TAGCCATGGG
F10		TCGACCCATGGCTAAT
F12		CCCGTCGACTTTCCCGGATCGTTCAAACATTGCG
F13		CCCGGATCCAAAAATGGTGACAGTCGAGG
F14		CCGGTCGACGCAAATACATTCATGGCAAACG
F15		GGCGGATCCAAAAATGTCTCCTCCAGTGTC
F16		CCCGTCGACCTAAACTAGACTCCAATCACT
F20		CGGGGATCCAGAGGGCCTAACTTCTGTATAGAC
F21		CCCGTCGACTCGCGAAGATATAGCTAATCGC
F23		CCGGGATCCGGTCTTTTGCACTGTGAATG
F26		GGCGGTACCCTAATGATATGTTTCACG
F38		AATTGGGCGCGCCAAGCTTCCGAATTCTTAATTAAG
F39		AGCTCTTAATTAAGAATTCGGAAGCTTGGCGCGCCC
F48		TGTCTCTAGCCATCTACAGG
F51		GAGTTCACCACTGCTTGATGA
F75		CCGGTCGACTTCGAGTATTATGGCATTGG
FLSs1		AATGATAGAGGCAGCTGGTG
FLSas1		GGCCTCACTAAGCAGCTTAGG
Gus2		GCATCACGCAGTTCAACGCTG
NosAs		CCGGCAACAGGATTCAATCTT
30035S		CGCAAGACCCTTCCTCTATATAAG
M13rev		AGCGGATAACAATTTACACAGGA
CHI6		CTTCTCCGAGTACTGCTTGCC

* Adapters are made by combining two primers, heating to 95°C for 5min and anneal both primers by cooling slowly to room temperature.

Table 2.

Typical retention times of some flavonoid standards.			
Flavonoid standard	detection wavelength (nm)	retention time (minutes)	
		isocratic run	gradient run
Rutin	370	-	12.4
Quercetin-3-glucoside	370	-	13.5
Kaempferol-3-rutinoside	370	-	14.9
Naringenin-7-glucoside	280	x	17.0
Quercetin	370	5.1	26.5
Naringenin	280	8.3	35.6
Naringenin chalcone	370	-	38.2
Kaempferol	370	9.8	40.3

Table 3:

Flavonoid levels ($\mu\text{g/g DW}$), determined by HPLC following extraction under non-hydrolysing conditions, from pericarp flesh tissue of pBBC60 (H series) and pSJ89 transformed tomato fruit. (narin = naringenin, gly = glycoside)

Line number	Naringly. #1	Naringly #2	Narin-7gluc	Narin #2	Narin #3	Narin #4	Narin #5
SJ89/3(1)	<5	10	<5	10	<5	5	<5
SJ89/3(2)	<5	<5	<5	30	<5	<5	<5
FM6203/1	<5	<5	<5	40	5	10	15
H71/1	10	10	130	<5	<5	50	10
H71/4	10	10	130	40	<5	10	10
H71/5	5	10	80	50	<5	40	<5
H71/7	10	20	90	40	<5	30	5
H103/1	20	<5	190	<5	<5	50	10
H103/2	<5	5	40	5	<5	20	<5
H103/3	5	10	70	20	<5	30	<5
H103/4	20	30	180	30	<5	60	10
H103/5	5	20	90	50	<5	<5	10
H104/1	20	20	160	20	<5	60	10
H104/5	40	50	220	30	<5	90	20
H104/6	10	10	60	5	<5	30	5

Table 4:

Flavonoid levels ($\mu\text{g/g DW}$), determined by HPLC following extraction under hydrolysing conditions, from columella tissue of pBBC60 (H series) and pSJ89 transformed tomato fruit. (narin = naringenin, gly = glycoside)

Line number	Naringly. #1	Naringly #2	narin-7-gluc	Narin #2	Narin #3	Narin #4	Narin #5
SJ89/3(3)	<5	<5	<5	30	<5	10	<5

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Table 4: (continued)

Flavonoid levels ($\mu\text{g/g DW}$), determined by HPLC following extraction under hydrolysing conditions, from columella tissue of pBBC60 (H series) and pSJ89 transformed tomato fruit. (narin = naringenin, gly = glycoside)

Line number	Naringly. #1	Naringly #2	narin-7-gluc	Narin #2	Narin #3	Narin #4	Narin #5
H71/1	20	10	230	50	30	100	30
H71/2	20	10	110	20	<5	10	5
H71/4	20	20	170	20	<5	50	10
H71/5	10	10	80	50	<5	40	5
H71/7	20	20	200	40	10	60	20
H104/2	<5	20	180	20	<5	70	20
H104/3	70	40	230	50	30	100	30
H104/5	20	20	200	20	<5	80	20
H104/6	100	60	280	20	<5	110	30

Table 5 :

Flavonoid levels $\mu\text{g/gDwt}$, determined by HPLC following extraction under hydrolysing conditions from peel tissues from pBBC80 (F series) and pSJ89 (EG series) transformed tomato fruit.

Line Number	Naringenin	Quercetin	Kaempferol
EG68	168	142	23
EG73	260	210	30
EG72	310	175	25
EG69	380	235	15
EG71	695	285	40
EG3	840	350	55
EG1	1049	241	20
EG74	1268	359	34
F101	80	120	5
F51	160	235	40
F50	175	105	30
F96	185	180	30
F94	200	135	20
F105	220	200	30
F27	267	191	20
F88	285	80	20
F92	335	330	25
F24	337	162	17
F28	345	230	20
F90	355	165	25

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Table 5 : (continued)

Flavonoid levels $\mu\text{g/gDwt}$, determined by HPLC following extrctation under hydrolysing conditions from peel tissues from pBBC80 (F series) and pSJ89 (EG series) transformed tomato fruit.

Line Number	Naringenin	Quercetin	Kaempferol
F23	410	265	45
F121	470	330	50
F97	510	345	65
F89	525	270	35
F12	540	340	50
F109	565	165	30
F80	565	310	35
F104	635	130	20
F99	649	207	25
F57	654	143	12
F21	704	248	23
F13	815	285	45
F53	835	264	20
F31	1126	272	30
F93	1200	350	80
F1	1305	380	45
F98	1455	385	50
F60	1830	440	90
F85	1990	470	80
F63	2040	520	70
F61	2425	585	105

Table 6:

Flavonoid levels $\mu\text{g/gDwt}$, determined by HPLC following extraction under hydrolysing conditions from peel (A), pericarp (B) and columella (C) tissues from tomato fruit harbouring both CHS and FLS (CHSxFLS series) or GUS control (SJ89 series) transgenes.

A.			
Peel	Naringenin	Quercetin	Kaempferol
SJ89/1	450	639	32
SJ89/2	525	471	58
SJ89/3	622	476	34
SJ89/4	605	597	53
SJ89/5	582	546	50
CHSxFLS / 6	316	344	45
CHSxFLS / 8	588	446	67

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Table 6: (continued)

Flavonoid levels $\mu\text{g/gDwt}$, determined by HPLC following extraction under hydrolysing conditions from peel (A), pericarp (B) and columella (C) tissues from tomato fruit harbouring both CHS and FLS (CHSxFLS series) or GUS control (SJ89 series) transgenes.

A.			
Peel	Naringenin	Quercetin	Kaempferol
CHSxFLS / 10	976	705	112
CHSxFLS / 11	2224	807	108
B.			
Pericarp	Naringenin	Quercetin	Kaempferol
SJ89/1	1	6	9
SJ89/2	1	6	11
SJ89/3	1	10	11
SJ89/4	1	6	8
SJ89/5	1	2	11
CHSxFLS / 6	1	5	9
CHSxFLS / 8	69	19	72
CHSxFLS / 10	189	23	108
CHSxFLS / 11	294	31	145
C.			
Columella	Naringenin	Quercetin	Kaempferol
SJ89/1	1	8	8
SJ89/2	1	6	9
SJ89/3	1	4	11
SJ89/4	1	10	9
SJ89/5	1	11	10
CHSxFLS / 6	<1	5	8
CHSxFLS / 8	317	23	238
CHSxFLS / 10	673	19	266
CHSxFLS / 11	727	18	299

Table 7:

Flavonoid levels ($\mu\text{g/gDwt}$), determined by HPLC following extraction under non-hydrolysing conditions from peel tissue from pBBC800 and pCJ102 transformed tomato fruit.										
pBBC 800 Line nos.	quergly #1	kaempgly. #1	quertisac.	rutin	isoquercitrin	k-3rut.	quergly #2	Kaempgly. #3	Kaempgly. #2	naringenin chalcone
2	520	130	210	20920	3150	1130	780	160	90	20
3	40	<5	60	370	<5	20	<5	<5	20	100
7	220	50	150	8200	1863	320	350	60	20	20
15	430	40	170	7370	130	120	230	10	30	10
20	1740	10	650	12050	90	30	160	10	20	40
22	530	30	590	22410	4640	240	1530	60	30	30
33	3290	30	530	21780	170	20	1070	20	20	30
34	610	30	500	20100	1930	230	490	30	40	20
37	660	50	190	1570	370	230	400	<5	10	5
41	430	60	200	11040	1160	300	360	50	20	10
42	50	10	330	980	5	60	20	<5	20	650
90	170	40	340	12330	1190	570	340	50	30	310
92	290	70	590	18710	2490	830	400	90	60	5
123	490	260	110	26750	13040	2020	3520	1210	360	10
125	720	100	130	11370	430	250	270	40	30	<5
145	670	200	290	23930	9170	1450	210	650	210	<5
111	580	120	140	13440	2250	620	40	180	40	30
112	570	80	330	24090	5030	750	1210	230	70	20
114	1380	20	300	9930	240	80	450	<5	30	20
115	570	90	330	17060	2260	650	840	140	70	20
117	60	10	180	870	10	50	10	10	<5	1160
118	1380	140	520	40750	10010	1260	2090	410	120	60

Table 7: (continued)

Flavonoid levels ($\mu\text{g/gDwt}$), determined by HPLC following extraction under non-hydrolysing conditions from peel tissue from pBBC800 and pCJ102 transformed tomato fruit.										
pBBC 800 Line nos.	quergly.#1	kaempgly. #1	quertisac.	rutin	isoquercitrin	k-3rut.	quergly #2	Kaempgly. #3	Kaempgly. #2	naringenin chalcone
120	1300	30	210	5440	80	30	150	<5	30	10
126	1060	380	140	27170	6420	3050	1200	1150	280	10
128	660	110	190	4970	220	60	300	20	<5	<5
131	1490	50	430	9810	180	50	290	<5	10	10
135	650	100	380	23260	3170	890	700	160	80	10
135	820	150	340	22470	2800	980	810	160	80	10
143	1060	90	330	31630	5410	640	940	150	30	20
149	1190	90	440	23300	460	500	220	10	20	10
154	510	40	190	7600	130	50	210	10	20	10
155	330	90	210	8720	2300	450	420	170	40	10
pCJ1 02 Line nos.	quergly.#1	Kaempgly. #1	quertisac.	rutin	isoquercitrin	k-3-rut.	quergly #2	Kaempgly. #3	Kaempgly. #2	Naringenin chalcone
1	200	20	300	1350	30	70	40	20	10	870
2	80	10	210	1060	10	80	10	10	10	880
3	80	10	170	920	30	40	20	10	5	690
4	130	30	150	1020	<5	110	10	<5	40	360
5	80	20	120	530	<5	80	20	<5	40	330
6	80	10	80	570	<5	50	<5	<5	40	260
7	50	10	190	490	<5	30	10	<5	5	220
8	90	10	100	600	<5	60	10	<5	<5	320
9	50	10	60	480	<5	30	<5	<5	20	220
10	60	10	260	710	30	40	10	<5	10	120

Table 8:

Flavonoid levels (µg/gDwt), determined by HPLC following extraction under non-hydrolysing conditions from columella tissue from pBBC800 and pCJ102 transformed tomato fruit.												
pBB C80 0 Line Nos	quercgly #1	rutin	k-3rut.	k-gly #1	k-gly #2	nariny gly#1	nariny gly#2	nariny-7-gluc.	nariny #2	nariny #3	nariny #4	nariny #5
2	20	60	10	30	<5	5	5	80	<5	<5	40	<5
3	<5	20	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
7	20	50	50	120	40	50	20	50	<5	<5	80	<5
15	20	20	30	120	10	20	10	60	<5	<5	30	5
20	10	80	90	390	20	140	30	420	<5	<5	90	40
22	20	40	40	90	10	60	20	150	<5	<5	50	5
33	10	10	10	30	<5	20	10	100	<5	<5	40	10
34	20	30	10	40	<5	30	5	100	<5	<5	40	5
37	20	30	30	240	10	50	10	140	<5	<5	40	10
41	20	20	40	250	<5	90	10	180	30	10	40	20
42	<5	20	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	5	<5	5	<5	<5
92	40	90	100	320	10	<5	<5	5	<5	20	50	<5
111	20	30	90	360	20	60	20	320	<5	5	60	10
112	20	50	30	70	<5	30	10	140	<5	<5	50	<5
114	<5	30	<5	5	<5	20	10	40	<5	5	10	<5
115	30	50	30	120	10	30	10	90	40	<5	30	<5
117	<5	30	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	10	<5	<5	<5	<5
118	20	40	30	130	5	30	5	120	<5	<5	40	5
120	20	20	20	110	<5	40	5	150	<5	5	50	10
123	<5	20	40	120	<5	110	20	280	60	10	70	40
125	20	10	40	290	10	40	20	190	<5	<5	40	10
126	10	20	50	120	<5	30	5	170	<5	<5	40	10

Table 8: (continued)

Flavonoid levels (µg/gDwt), determined by HPLC following extraction under non-hydrolysing conditions from columella tissue from pBBC800 and pCJ102 transformed tomato fruit.												
pBB C80 0 Line Nos	quergly #1	rutin	k-3rut.	k-gly #1	k-gly #2	narin gly#1	narin gly#2	narin-7-gluc.	narin #2	narin #3	narin #4	narin #5
128	30	50	110	320	10	100	20	320	<5	5	130	20
131	30	30	70	300	20	160	30	310	<5	5	90	20
134	10	30	30	100	<5	<5	<5	80	<5	<5	10	<5
135	20	50	30	170	10	30	10	120	20	<5	10	10
143	10	30	100	230	5	40	10	260	<5	10	160	30
145	20	60	20	130	5	40	10	110	<5	<5	30	5
149	20	50	20	80	<5	10	10	130	<5	5	40	<5
154	20	30	20	110	<5	30	10	120	<5	5	60	<5
155	20	20	20	70	10	40	10	70	<5	<5	40	<5
pCJ102 Line nos.	quergly #1	rutin	k-3rut.	k-gly #1	kgly# 2	naringly#1	narin gly#2	narin-7-gluc.	narin #2	narin #3	narin #4	narin #5
1	<5	20	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	10	<5	5	<5	<5
2	<5	20	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	10	<5	<5	10	<5
3	<5	10	<5	5	<5	<5	<5	5	<5	5	5	<5
4	<5	20	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	5	<5	<5
5	<5	10	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	10	5	<5	<5
6	<5	20	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	10	<5	5	10	<5
7	<5	50	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	10	<5	5	10	<5
8	<5	40	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	5	<5	<5
9	<5	20	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	10	<5	5	10	<5
10	<5	10	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	5	<5	<5	<5	<5
"narin" = naringenin type compounds												

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Table 9:

Flavonoid levels (µg/gDwt), determined by HPLC following extraction under non-hydrolysing conditions from peel tissue from pBBC60+pBBC80+pBBC50 (CHSxFLSxCHI) and C11 azygous control fruit.

Line#	N-7-Glu	N gly#5	N gly#6	Rutin	Iso-quer	K-3-R-7-G	K-3-R
C11AZ2A	45.8	<5	<5	1570	7.9	12.8	70.1
C11AZ2B	89.6	<5	<5	1034	<5	33.1	106.9
C11AZ3A	689.6	<5	<5	3758	21.7	145.7	594.6
C11AZ 3B	297.1	<5	<5	4857	73.2	56.6	406.8
C11AZ 4A	246.1	<5	73.3	2097	<5	41.3	212.9
C11AZ 4B	551.1	<5	14.6	2850	13.4	12.0	120.9
C11AZ 6A	138.9	29.7	<5	1407.2	29.4	<5	242.6
C11AZ 6B	180.4	22.7	<5	1508.9	<5	80.5	287.3
10A	<5	<5	<5	48192	17690	407.3	3080
10B	<5	<5	<5	48340	16449	384.2	2565
22A	<5	<5	<5	61854	21377	285.1	2382
22B	<5	<5	<5	68117	27857	418.2	3471
28A	<5	<5	<5	51285	18223	441.6	3194
28B	<5	<5	<5	49689	19467	742	4642
37A	<5	<5	<5	45823	14572	431.1	2524
37B	<5	<5	<5	44348	16191	527.8	2903
40A	<5	<5	<5	40277	11980	237.2	1790
40B	<5	<5	<5	55452	19220	303.2	2657
42A	<5	<5	<5	57723	21110	344.6	2751
42B	<5	<5	<5	51570	15709	314	2536
43A	<5	<5	<5	44574	14875	360	2152
43B	<5	<5	<5	41553	14635	264.6	1550
44A	<5	<5	<5	50140	17895	302.2	2696
44B	<5	<5	<5	56067	16279	227	2319
45A	<5	<5	<5	48651	20440	360.6	2320
45B	<5	<5	<5	52471	21194	331.7	2315
48A	<5	<5	<5	38465	13760	218.4	1713
48B	<5	<5	<5	45996	16084	225.3	2209

Table 10:

Flavonoid levels (µg/gDwt), determined by HPLC following extraction under non-hydrolysing conditions from columella tissue from pBBC60+pBBC80+pBBC50 (CHSxFLSxCHI) and C11 azygous control fruit. n.d not determined.

Line #	N-7-Glu	N gly#5	N gly#6	Rutin	Iso-quer	K-3-R-7-G	K-3-R
C11AZ2A	<5	<5	<5	48.7	6.1	<5	<5
C11AZ2B	<5	<5	<5	41.6	5.8	<5	<5

Table 10: (continued)

Flavonoid levels ($\mu\text{g/gDwt}$), determined by HPLC following extraction under non-hydrolysing conditions from columella tissue from pBBC60+pBBC80+pBBC50 (CHSxFLSxCHI) and C11 azygous control fruit. n.d not determined.

Line #	N-7-Glu	N gly#5	N gly#6	Rutin	Iso-quer	K-3-R-7-G	K-3-R
C11AZ3A	<5	<5	<5	57.6	9.5	<5	<5
C11AZ 3B	<5	<5	<5	25.6	5	<5	<5
C11AZ 4A	<5	<5	<5	28.9	<5	<5	<5
C11AZ 4B	<5	<5	<5	61.4	<5	<5	<5
C11AZ 6A	<5	<5	<5	40.1	<5	<5	<5
C11AZ 6B	<5	<5	<5	39.2	<5	<5	<5
10A	463.7	179.4	68.9	65.1	<5	303.5	120
10B	556.1	253.4	99.9	65.1	12.6	375.1	102.2
22A	470.6	262.5	69.7	225.9	65.2	259.4	97.8
22B	611	304.2	111.4	55.3	14	304	97.1
28A	564.8	224	97.8	176.6	52.9	333.1	102.3
28B	441.6	169.6	82.2	122.8	29.3	324.8	85
37A	691	244.4	63.7	117.4	33.9	389.7	149
37B	493.7	180.7	52.4	126	31.8	261.6	131.9
40A	695.6	287.3	87.2	64.6	14.7	516.3	187.4
40B	668.4	236.1	84.5	191	60.4	434.8	173.5
42A	757.1	378.8	95.9	71	n.d	301.8	157.6
42B	557	173.6	60.3	228.5	51.6	405.7	231.3
43A	679.7	375	98.1	76.8	<5	340.1	140.4
43B	811.2	339.5	102.3	86.6	<5	408.3	120.7
44A	n.d	n.d	n.d	94.8	22.7	n.d	n.d
44B	n.d	n.d	n.d	157.1	36.6	n.d	n.d
45A	848.6	368.9	117.7	190.9	66.9	304.1	177.1
45B	835.7	379.9	125.1	80	15.3	295.4	158.9
48A	n.d	n.d	n.d	27.6	<5	n.d	n.d
48B	n.d	n.d	n.d	81	<5	n.d	n.d

[0192] The following literature references are mentioned in the Examples:

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Annex to the application documents - subsequently filed sequences listing

[0193]

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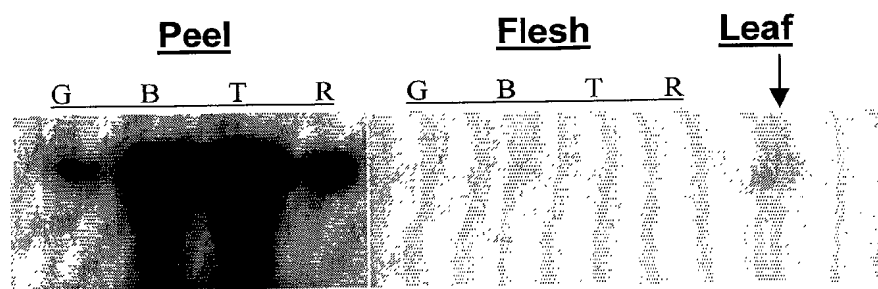
Claims

1. A process for increasing the flavonoid content of a plant wherein said process comprises increasing the activity of chalcone synthase and flavonol synthase therein.
2. A process according to claim 1 wherein said process comprises incorporating into said plant one or more nucleotide sequences encoding a chalcone synthase and one or more nucleotide sequences encoding a flavonol synthase.
3. A process according to either claim 1 or claim 2 wherein said process comprises the steps;
 - (i) transforming a plant cell with a gene construct;
 - (ii) regenerating said plant cell to produce a transformed plant;
 wherein said gene construct comprises one or more nucleotide sequences encoding a chalcone synthase and one or more nucleotide sequences encoding a flavonol synthase.
4. A process according to either claim 2 or claim 3 wherein said one or more nucleotide sequences comprise sequences according to sequence identification numbers 1 and 7.
5. A process according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the flavonol content of said plant is increased in leaf tissue and/or fruit tissue.
6. A process according to claim 5 wherein said increase in flavonoid content comprises an increase in flavanone content and/or an increase in flavonol content.

7. A process according to claim 6 wherein the flavanone content and/or the flavonol content of said plant is increased in pericarp tissue.
8. A process according to claim 6 wherein the flavanone content and/or flavonol content of said plant is increased in columella tissue.
9. A process according to any one of claims 6, 7 or 8 wherein said flavanone content comprises naringenin.
10. A process according to any one of claims 6, 7 or 8 wherein said flavonol content comprises kaempferol.
11. A process according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said plant is selected from a group comprising tobacco, vegetables from the families of Pisum, Brassicaceae, Phaseolus Spinacea Solanaceae Daucus, fruit from the families of Capsicum, Ribesiaceae, Pomaceae, Rosaceae, Rutaceae, oil producing plants such as sunflower, soybean and rape, and plants which can form the basis of an infusion.
12. A process according to claim 11 wherein said plant is a tomato plant.
13. A process according to claim 11 wherein said plant is a pea or spinach plant.
14. A gene construct comprising one or more nucleotide sequence encoding a chalcone synthase and one or more nucleotide sequences encoding a flavonol synthase wherein said nucleotide sequences are operably linked to a promoter.
15. A gene construct according to claim 14 wherein said gene construct comprises nucleotide sequences according to sequence identification numbers 1 and 7.
16. Use of a construct according to either claim 14 or claim 15 in the genetic transformation of a plant.
17. A genetically modified plant with an increased flavonoid content compared to an equivalent unmodified plant, wherein said genetically modified plant is obtainable by a process according to any one of claims 1 to 13.
18. A genetically modified plant according to claim 17 wherein said plant is selected from a group comprising tobacco, vegetables from the families of Pisum, Brassicaceae, Phaseolus Spinacea Solanaceae Daucus, fruit from the families of Capsicum, Ribesiaceae, Pomaceae, Rosaceae, Rutaceae, oil producing plants such as sunflower, soybean and rape, and plants which can form the basis of an infusion.
19. A genetically modified plant according to claim 18 wherein said plant is a pea plant or a spinach plant.
20. A genetically modified plant according to claim 18 wherein said plant is a tomato plant.
21. A food product comprising a genetically modified plant or part thereof according to any one of claims 17 to 20.
22. A food product according to claim 21 wherein said part comprises a tomato fruit.
23. A food product according to claim 22 wherein said food product is selected from the group comprising soup, paste, sauce, salsa and juice.

Figure 1

Chalcone synthase



Flavonol synthase

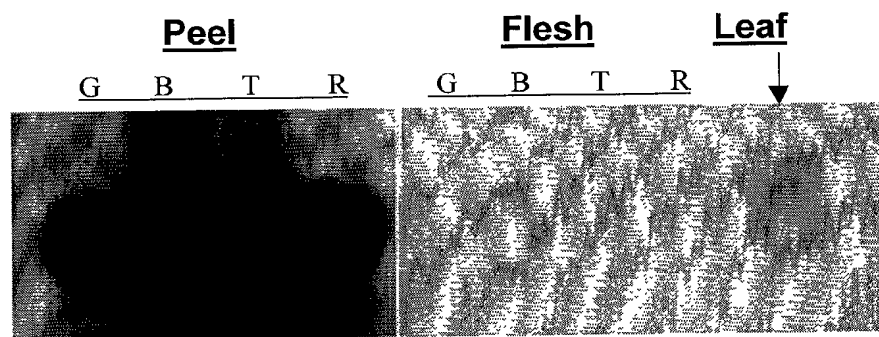


Figure 2a:

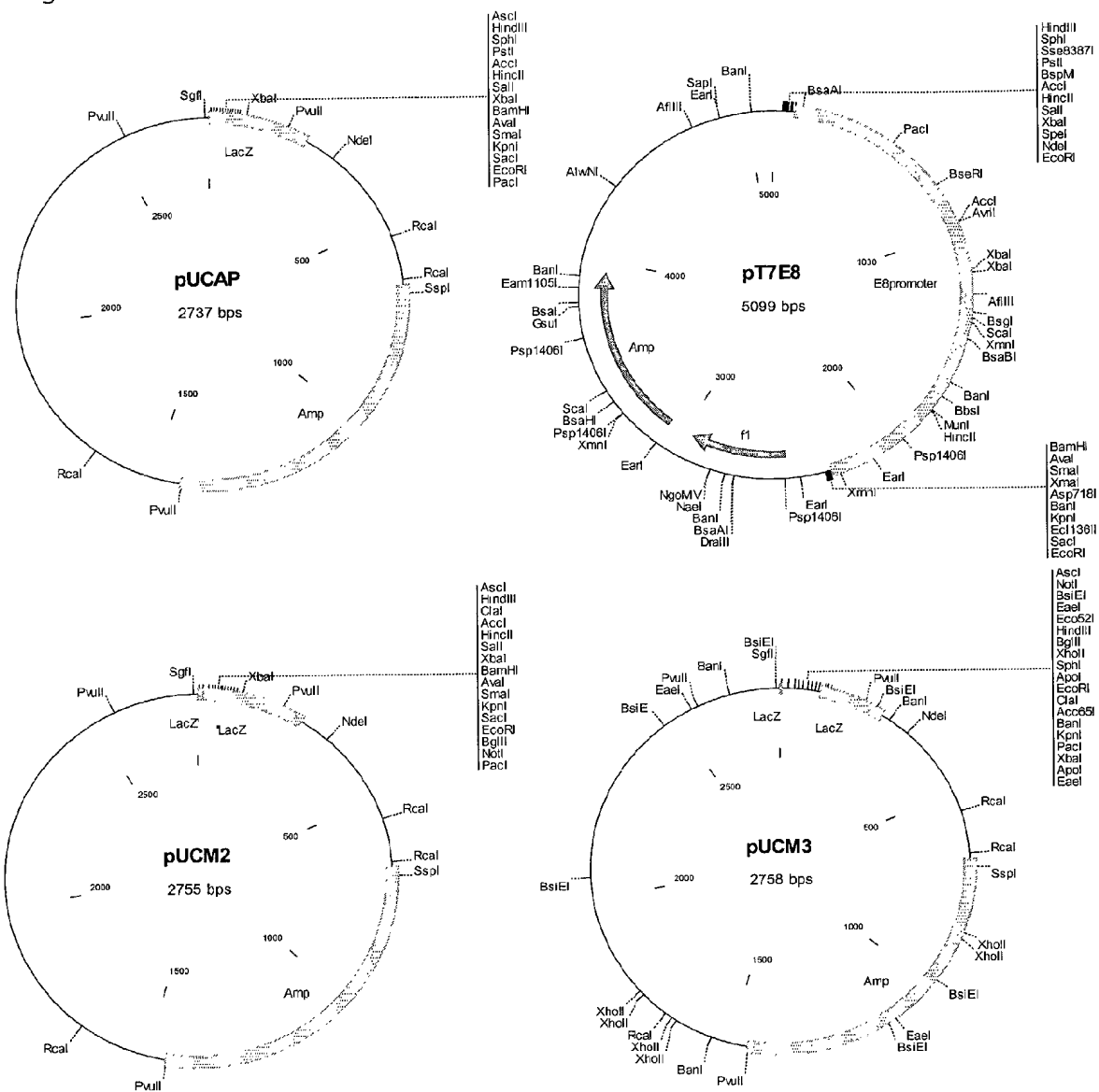


Figure 2b:

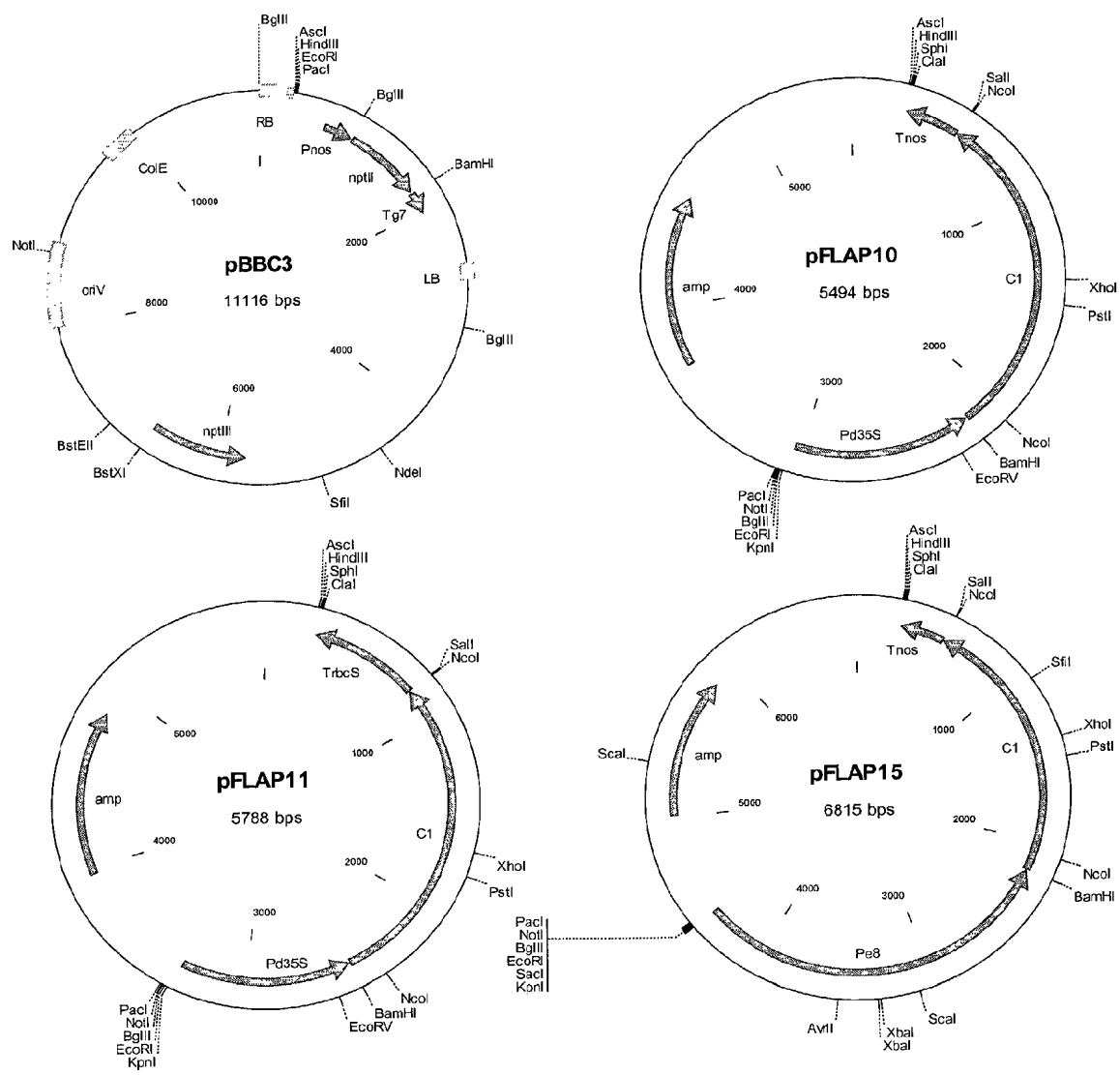


Figure 2c:

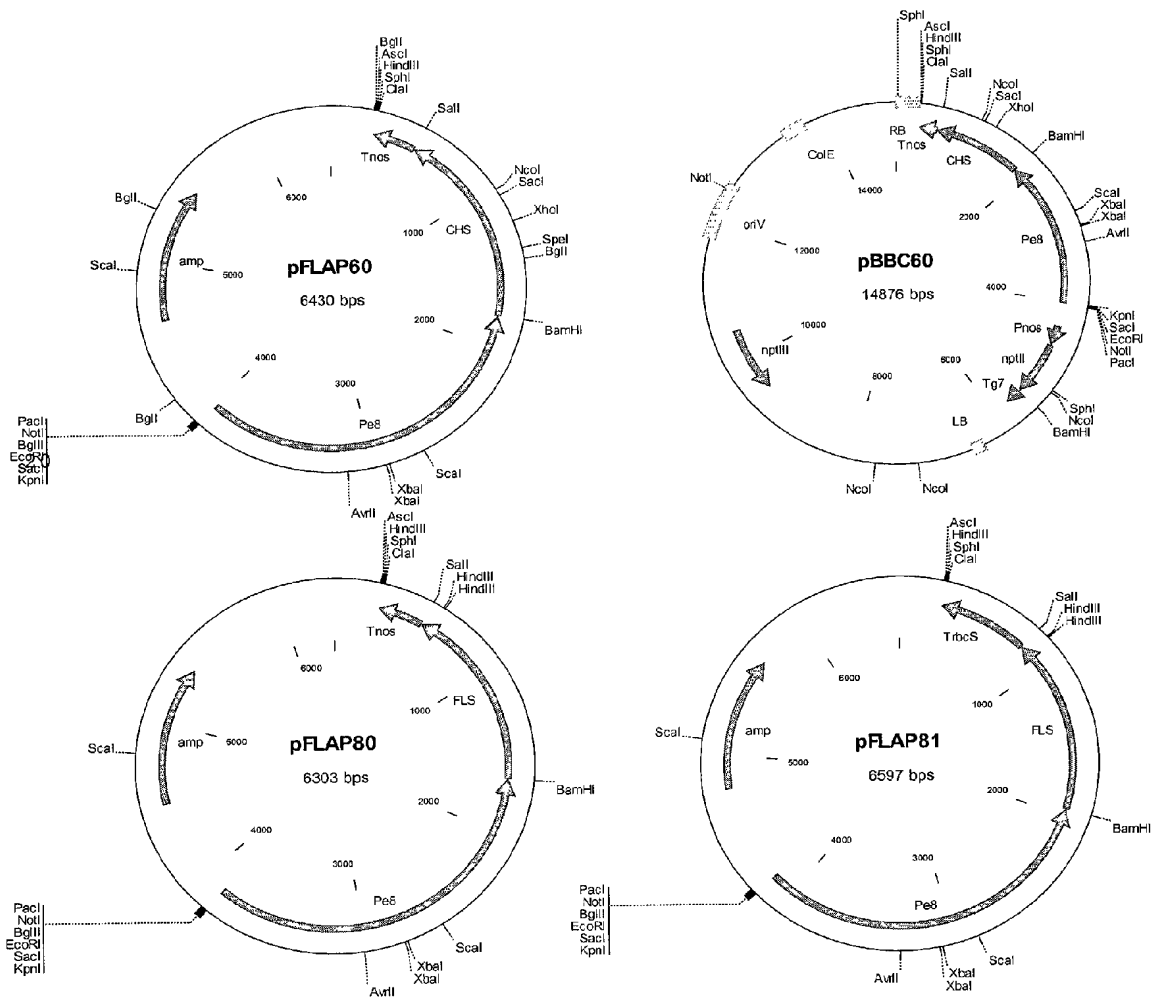


Figure 2d:

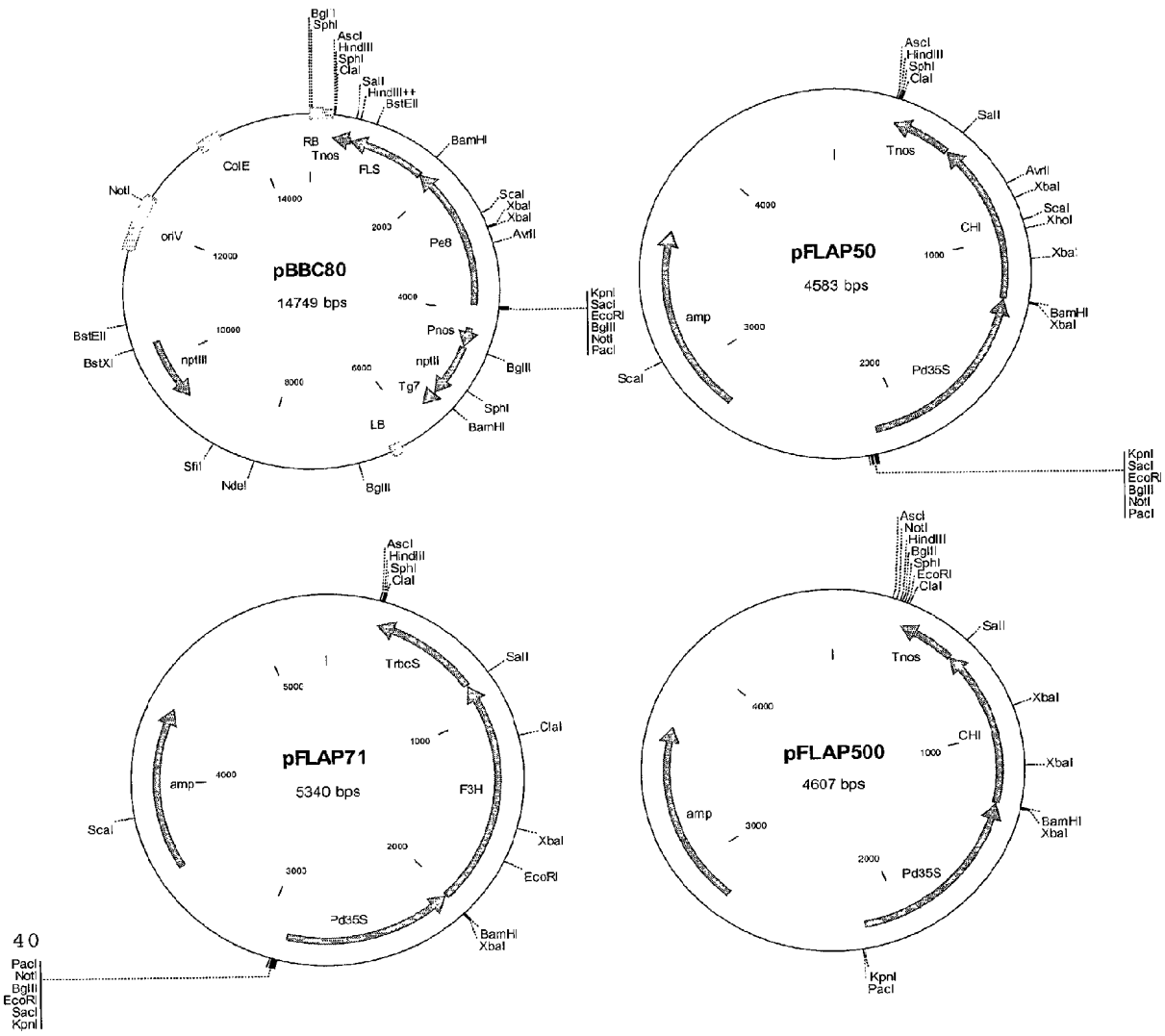




Figure 2f:

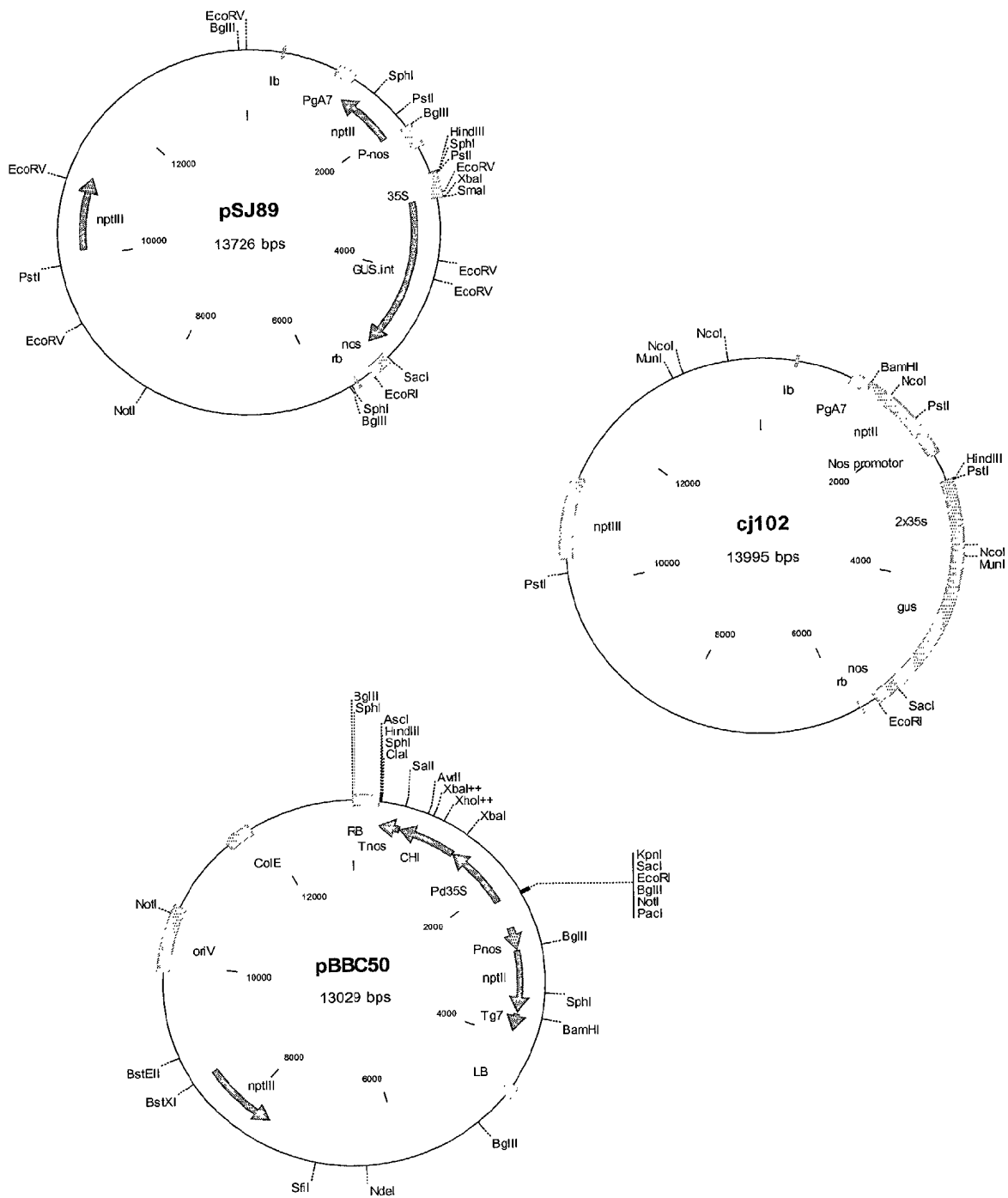
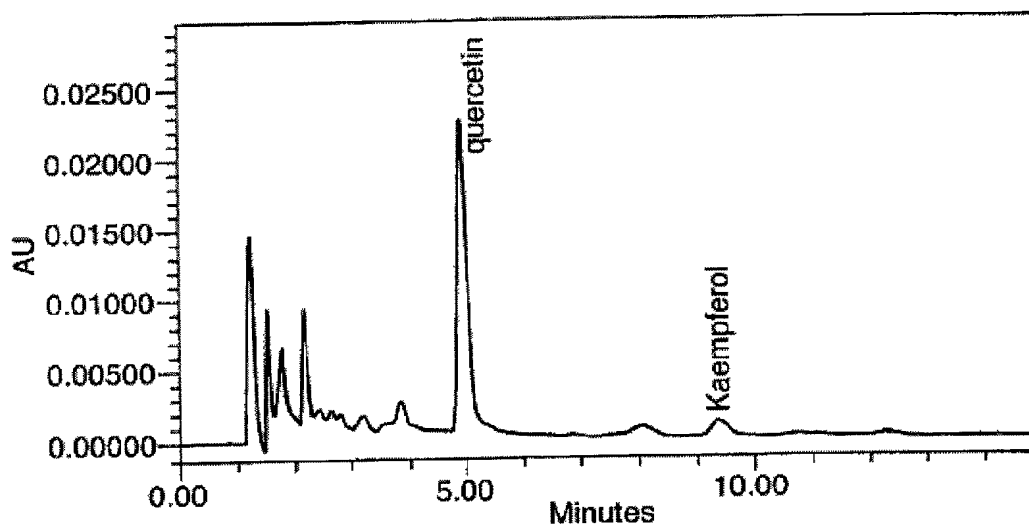
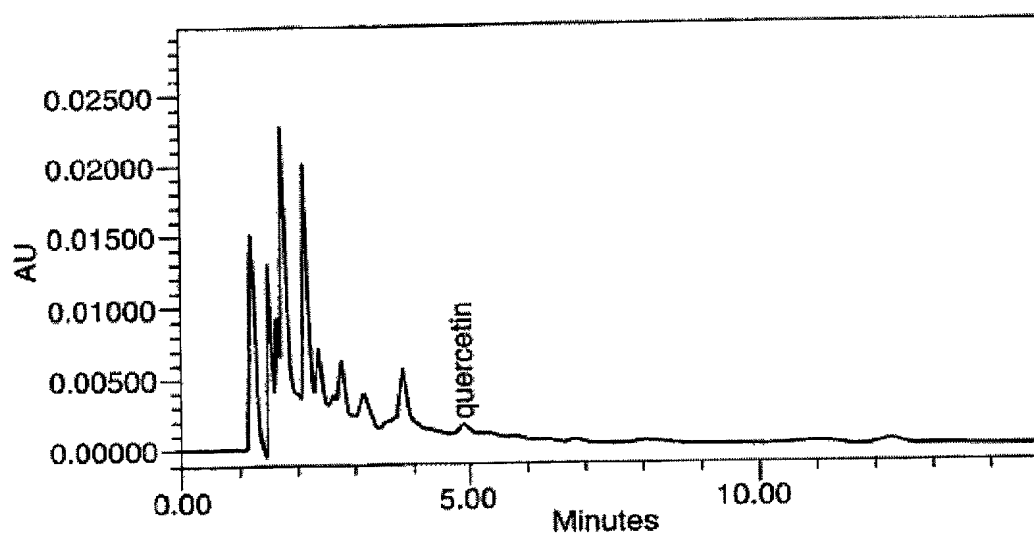


Figure 3:

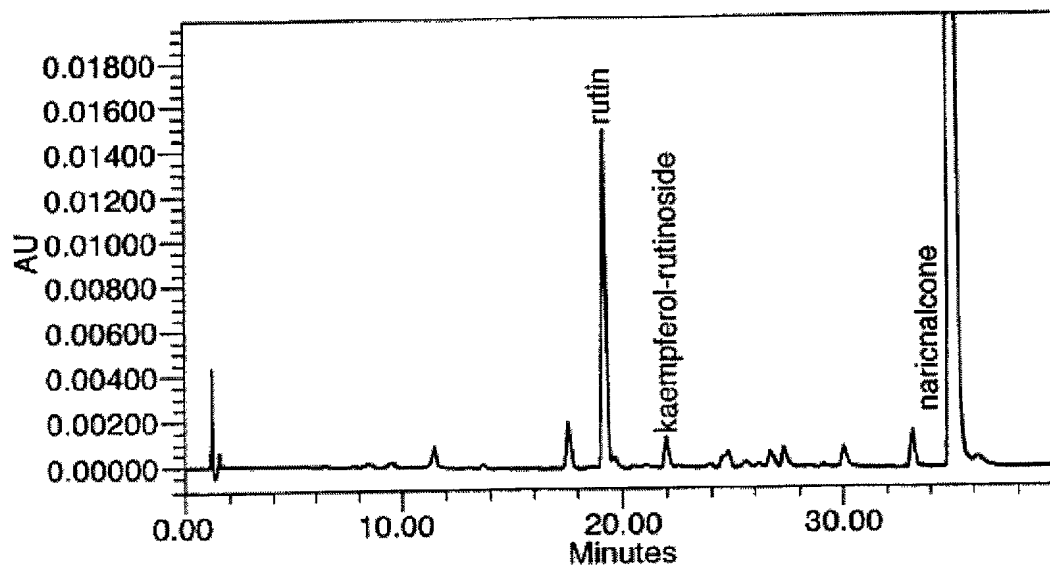
A: Peel



B: Flesh



C: Peel



D: Flesh

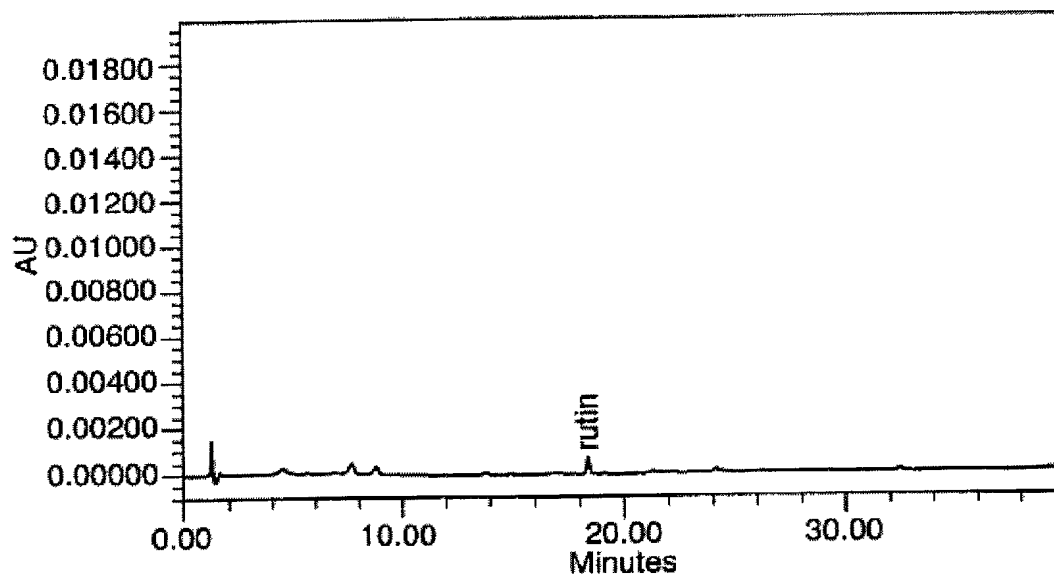
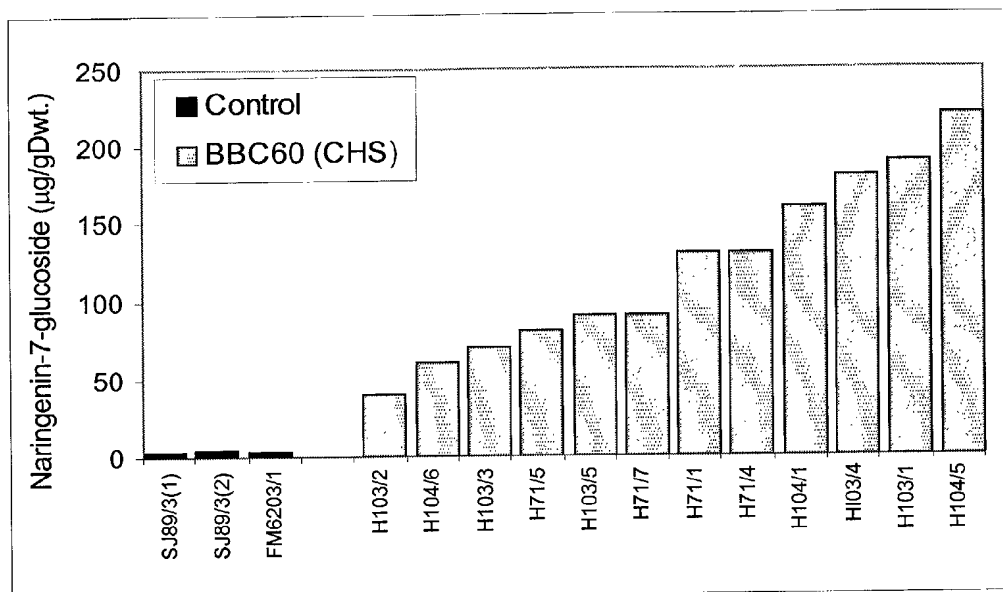


Figure 4:

A: Pericarp



B: Columella

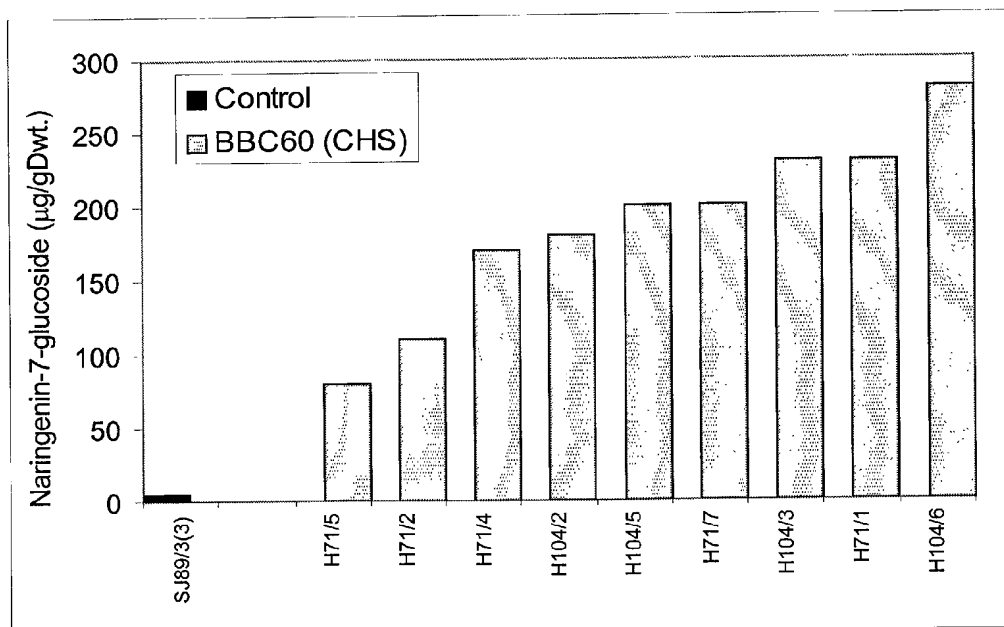


Figure 5:

A: Peel

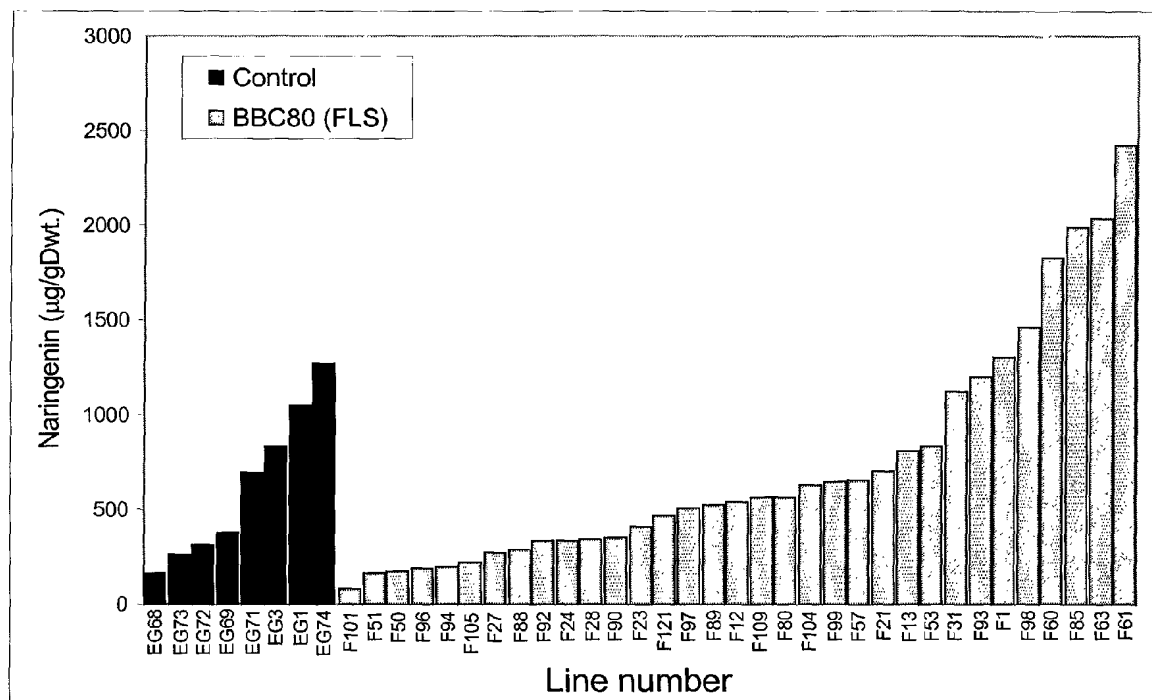
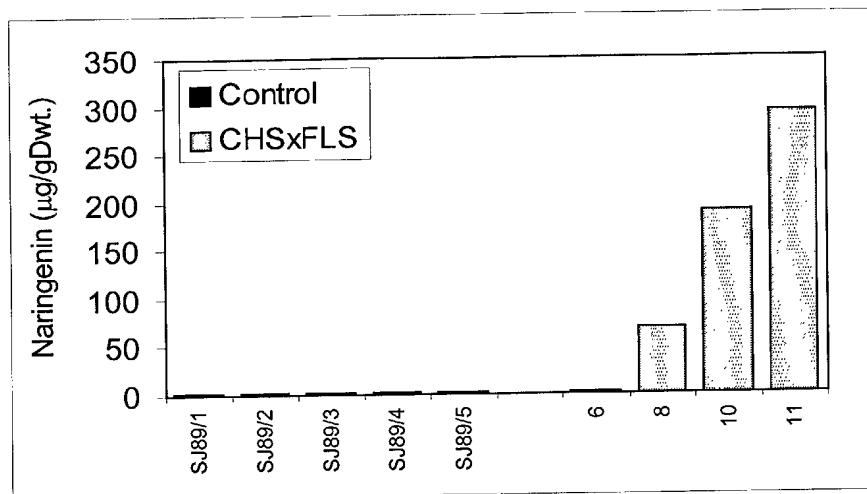


Figure 6:

A: Naringenin



B: Kaempferol

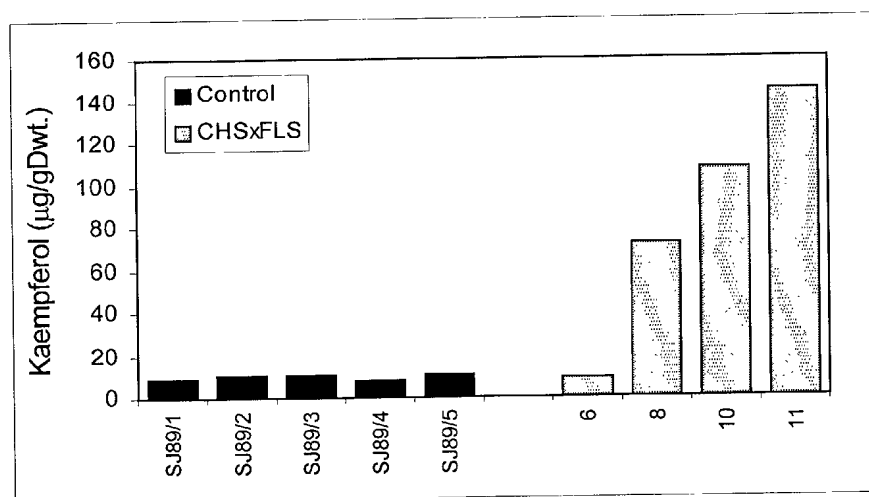
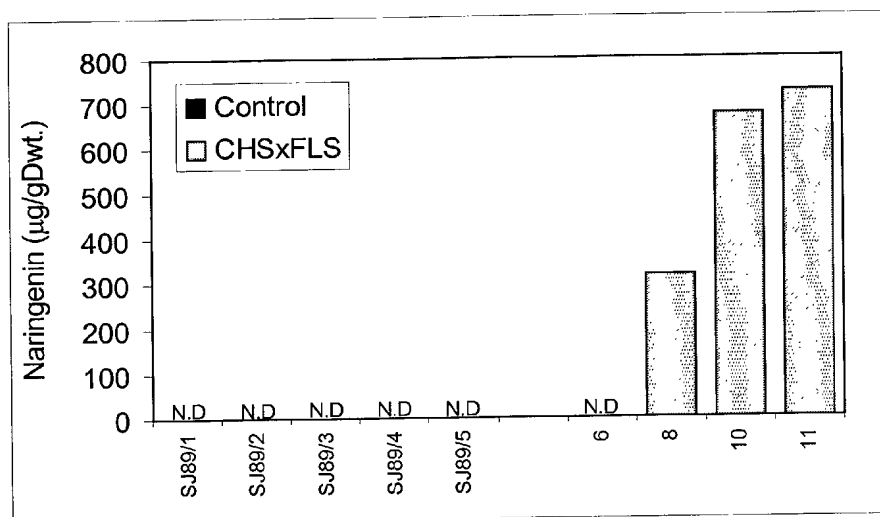


Figure 7:

A: Naringenin



B: Kaempferol

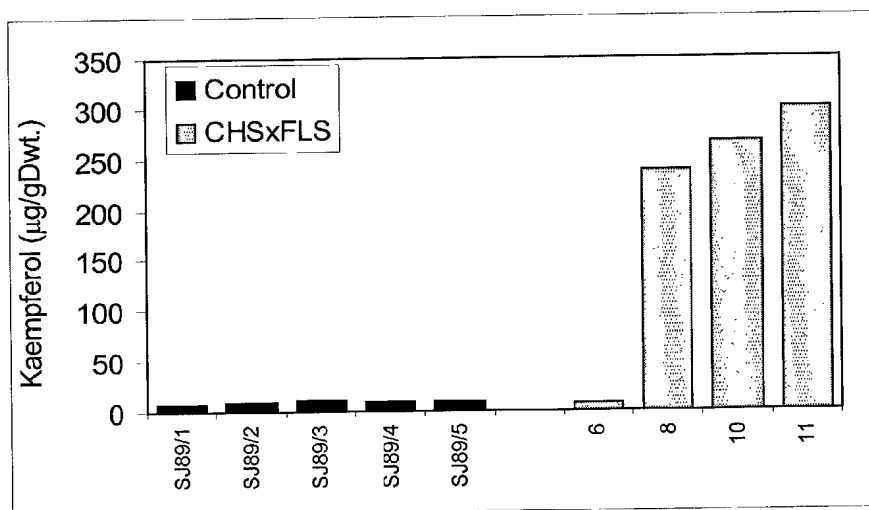
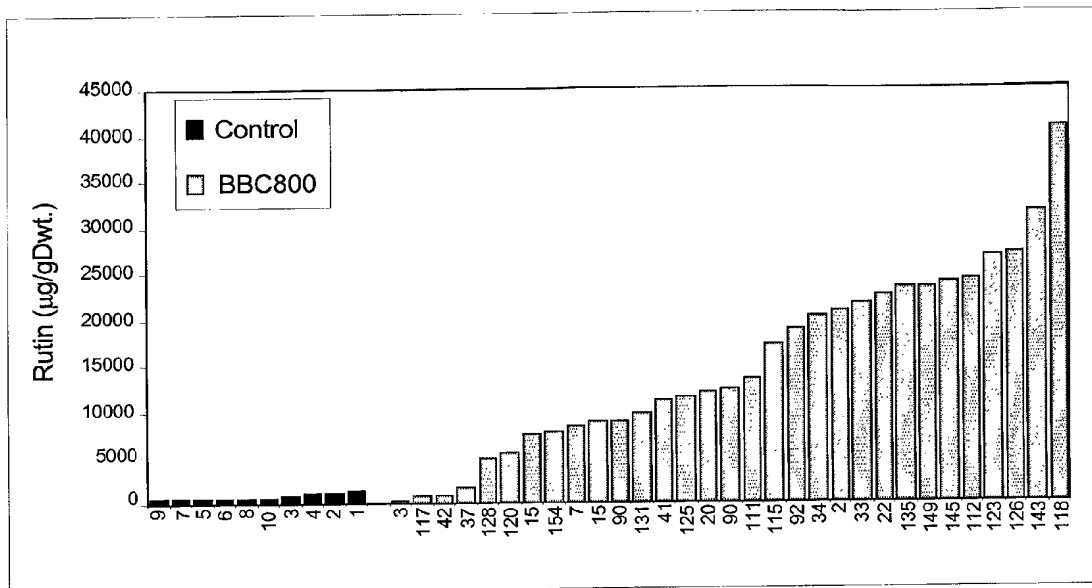


Figure 8:

A: Rutin



B: Kaempferol-3-rutinoside

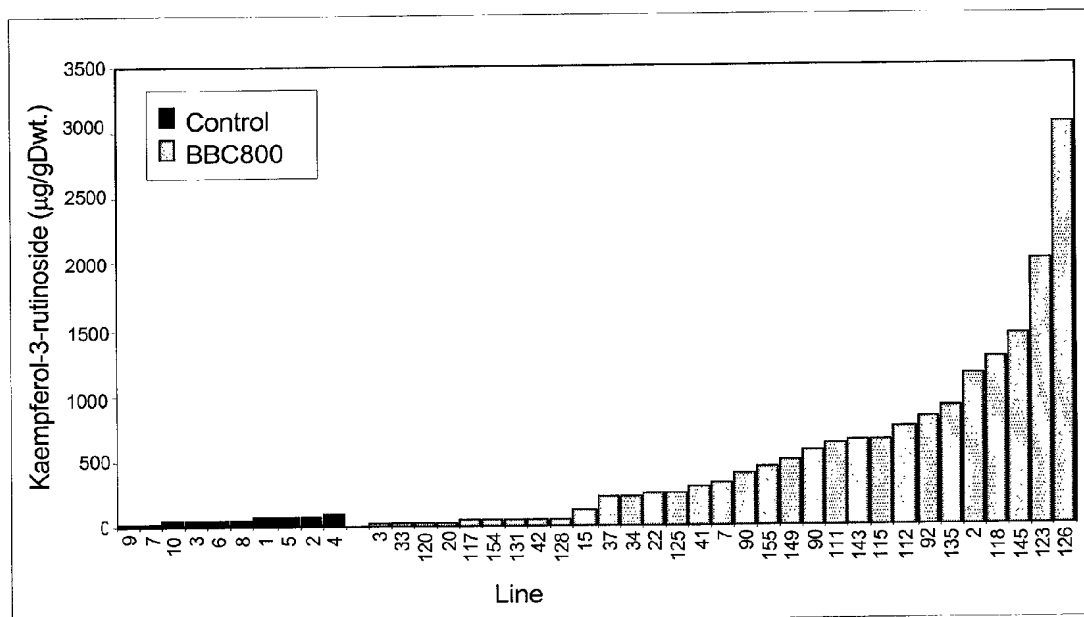
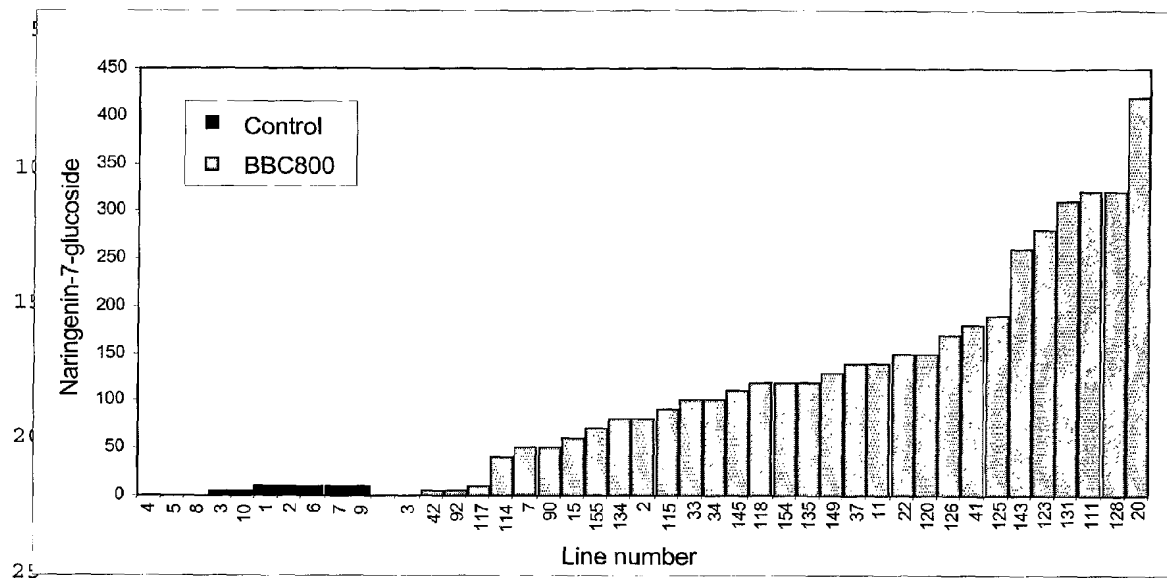


Figure 9:

A: Naringenin-7-glucoside



30 B: Kaempferol-3-O-rutinoside-7-O-glucoside

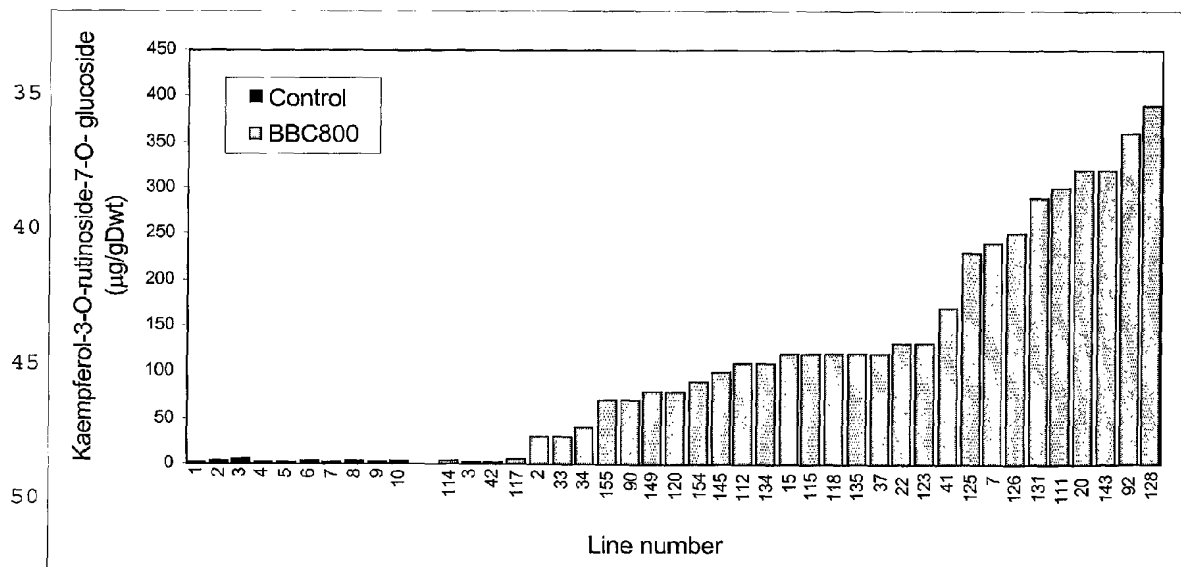


Figure 10: Sequence ID number :

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Figure 11: Sequence ID number :

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Figure 12: Sequence ID number :

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Figure 13: Sequence ID number :

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Figure 14: Sequence ID number :

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Figure 15: Sequence ID number :

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Figure 16: Sequence ID number :

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European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 02 25 2967

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
Y	WO 99 37794 A (UNILEVER) 29 July 1999 (1999-07-29) * abstract * * page 1, paragraph 3 - page 2, paragraph 2 * * page 3, paragraph 3 * * claims 1-24; figures 11-14 * * table 2 *	1-20	C12N15/82 C12N9/02
Y	US 5 859 329 A (INTERNATIONAL FLOWER DEVELOPMENTS PTY LTD) 12 January 1999 (1999-01-12) * abstract * * column 1, paragraph 6 - column 2, paragraph 1 * * column 2, paragraph 4 * * column 5, paragraph 4 * * table 1 * examples 1, 9 * column 8, paragraph 2 * * claims 1,26-31,37-42 *	1-20	
Y	DATABASE EMBL 'Online! Acc. No. : CAA27718, XP002192648	1-20	C12N
A	R. A. DIXON ET AL.: "flavonoids and isoflavonoids-a gold mine for metabolic engineering" TRENDS IN PLANT SCIENCE, vol. 4, no. 10, August 1999 (1999-08), pages 394-400, XP002192646		
A	J.B. HARBORNE ET AL: "Advance in flavonoid research since 1992" PHYTOCHEMISTRY, vol. 55, January 2000 (2000-01), pages 481-504, XP002192647		
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search MUNICH		Date of completion of the search 27 June 2002	Examiner Keller, Y
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

EPO FORM 1503 03/02 (PAC01)

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ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 02 25 2967

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27-06-2002

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